

# The Intellectual and Leadership Center of the Air Force



## HQ AU Writing Style Guide

Current as of 16 Jun 14

Repurposed as SC01VA1 for Airman Leadership School

The purpose of this guide is to establish uniform guidance in terms of writing style, reduce commonly-made mistakes and foster compliance with established Air Force (AF) guidance. The following AF resources have been used in establishing this guide:

- Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, Jt Pub 1-02
- AF Tongue and Quill
- AFI 36-2406, *Officer and Enlisted Evaluation Systems*
- AFI 36-2803, *The Air Force Military Awards and Decorations Programs*

This guide consists of:

- Evaluations Rules/Style Guidance
- Decorations Rules/Style Guidance
- Commonly Used Acronyms
- Abbreviations
- Hyphenated Words
- Commonly Used Words

The intent of this guide is not to be all-inclusive or exhaustive; rather to serve as a common baseline for accomplishing evaluation reports and decorations. Also, this should not be considered the absolute authority for all military correspondence. It is designed to help standardize abbreviations and minimize returns for corrections on OPRs and EPRs.

Please remember OPRs/EPRs should accurately reflect the performance and accomplishments of an individual. They must paint a picture of an individual's performance that is understandable across AFSCs. The reader should not have to "figure out" what the writer is saying. OPRs/EPRs/IMT Forms 1206 can be difficult to analyze due to the overuse of abbreviations and acronyms. The objective of this guide is to create an abbreviation listing that is common AF-wide (not squadron, wing, NAF, or even MAJCOM specific).

## Evaluations Rules/Style Guidance

### Rules:

1. Spelling errors are unacceptable. Use spell-check and/or a dictionary. IMT Forms have a spell check function...use it!
2. Ensure applicable sections of the form match the OPR/EPR notice.
3. Ensure bullets align properly on the form.
4. Do not check the AU/CC's concur/non-concur blocks on a form.
5. If physically signing an OPR/EPR, date the document with the actual date; do not back date documents.
6. If physically signing an OPR/EPR, use a pen that will not show through the opposite side of the document.
7. Spell out all uncommon acronyms on the back page of an OPR. Acronyms that are not spelled out should be commonly used AF-wide. Acronyms that are only common within an AFSC must be spelled out.
8. For stratification, keep in mind that unless the person is an award winner or is in a unique position where they "compete" AU-wide, AU/CC will stratify only to the level that he is the senior rater. AU/CCE or AU/A1L can clarify the "out of" number if you want to put a stratification in AU/CC comments.
9. Stratification statements will only be used on EPRs for SNCOs who are time-in-grade eligible for senior rater endorsement. Stratification statements on all other performance reports, to include CMSgt reports, are strictly prohibited.
10. In Section I, Block 5 (EPRs), Block 7 (OPRs), there is no comma between AFB, ARB, and ANG (e.g., MAXWELL AFB AL)
  - a. Do not add component (AD) if member is active duty.
11. Section II (EPRs & OPRs), Duty Title, should be ALL CAPS.
12. Blank rating blocks:
  - a. "THIS SECTION NOT USED" (all caps) on EPRs in Section VII, if AU/CC is the Additional Rater.
  - b. "THE ADDITIONAL RATER IS ALSO THE REVIEWER." (all caps) is used on OPRs if AU/CC is the additional rater.
  - c. "THE RATER IS ALSO THE REVIEWER." (all caps) is used on OPRs if AU/CC serves as both rater and additional rater.

### Style:

1. Two-line bullets are authorized, but discouraged. These can send the wrong message, unless that is the author's intent.
2. Apply the use of symbols and abbreviations consistently throughout the document.
3. In signature blocks, if one rank must be abbreviated for space, then all ranks should be abbreviated. If there is room to spell out all ranks, then ensure they are all spelled out.

4. Using a serial comma is optional. Apply this decision consistently throughout the document (e.g., “schools, institutions, and organizations” or “schools, institutions, and organizations”).
5. Any ratings such as “Outstanding” or “Excellent” should be in quotes and the first letter capitalized.
6. Names of official operations should appear in this format: Operation ENDURING FREEDOM; Operation NOBLE EAGLE. Abbreviations (e.g., OEF) are acceptable.
7. Keep abbreviations to a minimum.
8. Spell out Headquarters in all signature blocks, with the exception of the AU/CC’s signature block which does not have Headquarters in his signature block.
9. Numbers
  - a. When a sentence contains numbers in a related series and any numbers in the series are 10 or more, then express all in numbers (9 hamburgers, 12 hot dogs, 6 cookies).
  - b. When using the full organization name, include a “th” or “d” with the number (e.g., 42d Mission Support Group, Ninth Air Force). When using the abbreviated organizational name, do not include the “th” or “d” (42 MSG, 9 AF).
  - c. Always use numerals for:
    - i. Percentages, scores, ratios (10%, not ten % except in decorations which has to be spelled out).
    - ii. Dimension, size, and temperature (size 11 shoe).
    - iii. Numbers referred to as numbers (No 1, #1, number 1).
    - iv. Measurements.
    - v. Age.
  - d. If using dollar amounts or numbers in the thousands or millions, you can also express that number in K or M, such as \$4M or \$4K.
  - e. In OPRs/EPRs, an actual number can be used if requiring space.
10. If spelled out, the terms “professional military education” and “professional continuing education” are not capitalized. Exception: if part of a title (e.g., College of Enlisted Professional Military Education), then it is capitalized.

## Decorations Rules/Style Guidance

### **Rules:**

1. Spelling errors are unacceptable. Use spell-check and/or a dictionary.
2. Abbreviations and acronyms are not allowed in decorations.
3. Do not separate rank and name between succeeding lines.
4. Meritorious Service Medal and Commendation Medal citations are 14 lines maximum.
5. Achievement Medal citations are 11 or 12 lines maximum.

### **Style:**

1. Attempt to alternate between rank/last name and personal pronouns at the beginning of sentences.
2. Names of official operations should appear in this format: Operation ENDURING FREEDOM; Operation NOBLE EAGLE. Abbreviations are not acceptable.
3. Spell out numbers under 10. When a sentence contains numbers in a series and any numbers in the series are 10 or more, express all in numerals (9 hamburgers, 12 hot dogs, 6 cookies).
4. Symbols are not allowed in decorations (spell out “percent” and “dollars”).

## Commonly Used Acronyms:

### Reports and AF IMT 1206

Acronyms that are commonly used AF-wide do not need to be spelled out. This list is a guide and is not all inclusive. Acronyms that are not commonly used outside an organization or AFSC should be spelled out.

AF – Air Force
AFPC – Air Force Personnel Center
CGO – Company Grade Officer
CSAF – Chief of Staff of the Air Force
CMSAF – Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force
DOD or DoD – Department of Defense
FGO – Field Grade Officer
GO – General Officer
HAF – Headquarters Air Force
IDE – Intermediate Developmental Education
IA – Information Assurance
IG – Inspector General
IT – Information Technology
MAJCOM – Major Command
NCO – Non Commission Officer
PME – Professional Military Education
POTUS – President of the United States
SDE – Senior Developmental Education
SecAF, SAF – Secretary of the Air Force
SecDef – Secretary of Defense
SME – Subject matter expert
SNCO – Senior Non Commissioned Officer
USAF – United States Air Force

MAJCOMs and COCOMs do not need to be spelled out.

### Decoration Citations

Spell out all acronyms in decorations.

### General Correspondence

Spell out acronyms the first time they are used on all general correspondence to include memorandums and letters.

## Abbreviations

Use of abbreviations should be minimized to avoid misinterpretation and ease readability. Just because an abbreviation is on this list does not mean it will automatically make sense in the context of the bullet. Read it as the panel will read it.

### A

Abbreviation	abbr
Academic; Academy	acad
Accommodate; Accommodation;	accom
Accompanied; Accompany	“
Accomplish	accomp
Account; Accountant; Accounting	acct
Accreditation	accred
Active Duty; Administratively Determined	AD
Additional	add'l; addn
Administer; Administration;	admin
Administrative; Administrate	“
Advance; Advancement	adv
Air Force	AF
Air Force Specialty Code	AFSC
Agency	agcy
Acknowledge	ack
Aircraft	acft
Airman	Amn
Airman Basic	AB
Airman First Class	A1C
Allocate; Allocation	alloc
Alphabetical	alpha
Alternate	alt
Ammunition	ammo
Amount	amt
Analysis; analyst	analy
And	&
Air National Guard	ANG
Application	app; applic
Appointment	appt
Approval; Approve	appr
Approximate	approx
Air Guard Program	ARG
Arrival; Arrive	arr
Associate; Association	assoc

Assignment	asgn
Assist; Assistant	asst
Attach; Attachment	atch
Attention	attn
Attorney	atty
Authority; Authorization; Authorize	auth
Automatic	auto
Auxiliary	aux
Available; Availability	avail
Avenue	ave
Average	avg
Award	awd

## **B**

Balance	bal
Board	bd
Boulevard	blvd
Brigadier General	Brig Gen (USAF)
Building	bldg
Business	bus

## **C**

Calculate	calc
Cancel	canx
Capital; Capacity	cap
Captain	Capt
Category	cat
Center	ctr; cen
Certificate; Certification	cert
Certified	cert'd
Chairman	Chmn
Change	chg
Chaplain; Chief	ch
Chapter	chap
Charge	chrg
Check; Checked	ck; chk
Chief Master Sergeant	CMSgt
Chronological	chrono
Civil; Civilian	civ
Clear	clr
Colonel	Col
Combat	cmbt



Command; Commandant	cmd; comdt
Commander	CC; cdr; cmdr; comdr
Committee	cmte
Communication(s)	comm
Company	co
Conference	conf
Construction ; Construct	const
Continue	cont
Contract ; Contractor	contr
Control	ctl; ctrl
Coordinate ; Coordination	coord
Copy	cy
Corporate	corp
Country	ctry
Course; Courses	crs; crses
Currency	curr
Customer	cust

## **D**

Decoration	dec
Deduct	ded
Defense	def
Degree	deg
Delete	del
Depart; Departure; Depot; Deputy	dep
Department	dept
Department of Defense	DoD; DOD
Develop; Development	dev
Disbursement	disb
Discipline	dspln
Discount; Discontinue	disc
Disposition	disp
Distribute; Distribution	dist
Director; Directorate	dir
Division	div
Document; Documentation	doc
Down	dn
Dozen	doz; dz
Duplicate	dup

## **E**

Each	ea
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Edition; Editor	ed
Education	educ
Effect; Effective	eff
Eligible	elig
Eliminate	elim
Emergency	emerg
End-of-term	EOT
Endorsement	endr
English	engl
Engineer; Engineering	engn
Entitle; Entitlement	entl
Equal	eq
Equipment	equip
Equivalent	equiv
Estimate	est
Etcetera	etc
Evacuation	evac
Evaluate; Evaluation	eval
Examination	exam
Exchange	exch; exchg
Executive	exec
Exercise	ex; exer
Expedite	exped
Expense	exp
Experiment; Experimental	exper
Extend; Extension	ext

## **F**

Facility; Faculty	fac
Facsimile	fax
Faculty	fac; facu
Favorable	fav
February	Feb
Federal	fed
Field	fld
Figure	fig
Finance; Financial	fin
First Lieutenant	1 <sup>st</sup> Lt; 1 Lt
Fiscal Year	FY
Fitness	fit
Flight	flt
Flight Plan	flt pln
Foreign	fgn
Form	frm; fm

Format	fmt
Forward	fwd
Fraudulent	fraud
Frequency; frequent	freq
Friday	Fri

## **G**

General	Gen (USAF)
Geography; Geographic	geog
Governor	gov
Government	govt
Grade Point Average	GPA
Graduate	grad
Ground	gnd
Group	grp; gp
Guarantee	guar

## **H**

Headquarters	HQ
Health	hlth
Height	ht
High School	HS
Highway	hwy
History	hist
Honorable	hon
Hospital	hosp
Hours	hrs

## **I**

Identification	ident
Identified	ID'd
Immediate	immed
Immunization	immun
Implementation	impl
Include	incl
Incorporate	inc; incorp
Increase; Increment	incr
Industry; Indorsement	ind
Indefinite	indef

Independent	indep
Individual	indiv
Indoctrinate	indoc
Indorsement; Industry	ind
Information	info
Initial; Initialize	init
Injury	inj
Inoperative	inop
Inquiry	inq
Inspect; Inspector	insp
Institute; Institution	inst
Instructor	instr
Insurance	ins
Intelligence	intel
International	intl; int'l
Introduced; Introduction	intro
Inventory	inv
Itinerary	itin

## **J**

Joint	jt; jnt
Journal	jour
July	Jul
June	Jun
Junior	Jr.

## **K**

## **L**

Laboratory	lab
Language	lang
Large	lrg
Latitude	lat
Leader	ldr
Leadership	ldrsp; ldrshp
Leave	lv
Legal	lgl
Lesson(s)	lsn(s)
Letter	ltr
Level	lvl
Library	lib

License	lic
Lieutenant	Lt
Lieutenant General	Lt Gen (USAF)
Limited	ltd
Limited Active Duty Orders	LEAD
Liquid	liq
Locate	loc
Logistic	log
Longitude	long

## M

Magazine	mag
Maintenance	maint
Major	Maj
Manufacturing	mfg
Manager	mgr
Managed	manag'd
Management	mgt; mgmt
March	Mar
Master Sergeant	MSgt
Maximum	max
Measure	mea
Member	mbr
Medical; Medium; Median	med
Meeting	mtg
Membership	mbrshp; mbrsp
Memorandum	memo
Message	msg
Method	meth
Military	mil
Minimum; Minute	min
Miscellaneous	misc
Mission	msn
Mobilization; Mobilize	mob
Modification; Modify	mod
Monday	Mon
Month; Months	mo; mos
Multiple	mult

## N

National	nat'l; natl
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Negative	neg
Next of Kin	NOK
Nominate; Nominee	nom
Normal	norm
Not Applicable	N/A
November	Nov
Nuclear	nuc
Number; Numerical	num

## O

Object	obj
Obsolete	obs
Occupation	occup
October	Oct
Office	ofc
Officer(s)	ofcr(s)
Officership	ofersp; ofcrshp
On-The-Job Training	OJT
Operations	ops
Opportunity	oppor
Option	opt
Order; Ordnance	ord
Organization	org
Original	orig
Overtime	OT

## P

Page	pg
Pamphlet	pam
Paragraph	para
Parenthesis; Parentheses	paren
Patient; Point	pt
Payment (s)	pmt (s)
Percent	pct
Performance	perf
Perimeter	perim
Period	pd
Permanent	perm
Personnel	pers; psnl
Physical	phys
Package	pkg
Plan	pln

Planning	plng
Please	pls
Pledge	pldg
Population	pop
Positive	pos
Position	posn
Possession; Possible	poss
Potential	pot
Preference	pref
Preliminary	prelim
Premium	prem
Prepare	prep
President; Presentation	pres
Previous	prev
Priority	pri
Primary	prim
Principal	prin
Private	priv
Problem	prob
Process	proc
Professional; Professor	prof
Program; Programmers	prog; prgm; prgmrs
Project; Projectile	proj
Promotion	promo
Psychology	psych
Publication	pub
Purchase; Purchasing	pur
Purpose	purp

## **Q**

Quality	qual
Quantity	qty
Quart	qt
Quarter	qtr
Quarterly	qtrly

## **R**

Range	rng
Rank	rnk

Received	rec'd
Recommendation	rec; rcmdt
Reconnaissance	recce; recon
Recognition; Recognize	recog
Re-enlist	re-enl
Re-examination	re-exam
Refer; Reference	ref
Regional	rgnl
Registrar	regr
Regular; Regulation	reg
Reject	rej
Religion	relig
Reorganize	reorg
Report	rpt
Representative; Represent	rep
Request	req
Research	rsch
Reserve	res; resrv
Reserve Airman Not on Active Duty Orders	Non-EAD
Resignation	resig
Responsible	resp; respon
Result	rslt
Retired	ret
Return	rtn
Review(ed)	rvw('d)
Require	rqr
Requirements	rqmts
Route	rte
Runway	rwy

## S

Saturday	Sat
Schedule; School	sch; sched
Science	sci
Screen	scrn
Search	srch
Second; Section	sec
Secretary	secy
Security	scty
Select; Selection	sel
Semester	sem
Senate	sen
Senior	sr



Senior Airman	SrA
Senior Master Sergeant	SMSgt
Separate	sep
September	Sep
Sequence	seq
Service	svc
Signal; Signature	sig
Situation	sit
Size	sz
Software	s/w
Society	soc
Specification; Specify	spec
Sponsor	spon
Squadron; Square	sq; sqd; sqdn
Staff Sergeant	SSgt
Standard	std
Statistic	stat
Storage	stor
Strategic; Stratification; Strategy	strat
Street	st
Student	stu
Structure	strc
Subject	subj
Subordinate	subor
Subparagraph	subpara
Substitute	sub
Summary	sum
Sunday	Sun
Superintendent	supt
Supervisor	supv
Supplement	supp
Supply; superior	sup
Support	spt
Surgeon; Surgical	surg
Survey	sur
Survival	surv
Suspense	susp
System	sys

## **T**

Target	tgt
Tax	tx
Team	tm
Technical	tech

Technical Sergeant	TSgt
Telecommunications	telecom
Telephone	tel; tele
Telephone Conference	telecon
Temperature; Temporary	temp
Terminate; Termination	term
Territory	terr
Text	txt
Theater	thtr
Thousand	thou
Thursday	Thurs
Total	tot
Traditional	trad
Training	tng; trng
Transaction; Transport; Transportation	trans
Transfer	xfer
Travel	tvl
Transmit; transmittal	xmit
Treatment	trmt
Tuesday	Tues

## U

Unclassified	unclas
Unfavorable	unfav
Universal; University	univ
Unknown	unk
Unsecure	unsec
Urgent	urg
Ultimately	ult

## V

Vacant; Vacate	vac
Vehicle	veh
Vertical	vert
Veteran	vet
Vice President	VP
Visibility; Visual	vis
Volume; Volunteer	vol
Volunteered	vol'd

## W

Weapon	wpn
Wednesday	Wed
Week	wk
Weight	wt
With	w/
Wing	wg
Withdrawn	wd
Workgroup(s)	wkgrp(s)
Workshop	wkshp

## X

## Y

Year	yr
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## Z

## Hyphenated Words

Air Force-wide	As shown
decision-making (adj) decision making (n)	As shown (decision-making process) (process of decision making)
e-mail	As shown
Force-multiplier	As shown
forward-thinking (adj)	As shown
hand selected (v) or hand-selected (adj)	As shown
high-tech or hi-tech	As shown
in-residence	use - when referring to school attendance, otherwise can be 2 words
on-line; online	As shown
single-handedly	As shown
2-star or two-star	As shown

## **Commonly Used Words**

Air Force's	As shown
Airman; Airmen	As shown
Counterinsurgency	As shown
follow-up (adj/noun) follow up (verb)	Not followup
general officer	As shown
groundbreaking	As shown
handpicked (verb) hand-picked (adj/noun)	As shown
interservice	As shown – defined as: between or amongst various services
intraservice	As shown – defined as: within the confines of one service
joint	Not capitalized unless part of a title, i.e., Joint Chiefs of Staff. Otherwise written joint air campaign or joint doctrine
linchpin; lynchpin	As shown; either is acceptable
multi	In forming compounds, multi is normally joined to the following word or element without a space or hyphen; multitalented, multimedia, multinational, etc. However, if the second element begins with “I,” it is separated with a hyphen: multi-infection
nationwide	As shown

non	In forming compounds, non is normally joined to the following word or element without a space or hyphen: noncommissioned, noncompliance, nonproliferation, etc. However; if the second element begins with a capital letter, it is separated with a hyphen: non-French
point man	As shown
professional military education (PME)	Do not capitalize when referring to PME in general. Capitalize when part of a title, i.e., College for Enlisted Professional Military Education (CEPME)
re	In forming compounds, “re” is normally joined to the following word or element without a space or hyphen: reopen, rearm, recapture, redress, reissue, etc. However, if the second element begins with “e” it is separated with a hyphen: re-entry
self	When self if joined with a word that can stand alone, it is joined by a hyphen: self-deception, self-confident, self-motivated. In the rare cases when self is joined with a word that cannot stand alone, it is joined without a space or hyphen
topnotch; top-notch; top notch	As shown; all are acceptable
trans	In forming compounds, “trans” is normally joined to the following word or element without a space or hyphen: transcontinental, etc. However, if the second element begins with a capital letter, it is usually separated by a hyphen: trans-Canadian. Note “certain compounds have become one word over a period of time: transatlantic, so check the dictionary if in doubt
Total Force	Capitalize when referring to an inclusive Air Force perspective (active duty, guard, reserves, civilian, etc)

unwavering	As shown
web master	As shown
web page	As shown
website; web site	As shown; either is acceptable
worldwide	As shown
warfighter; warfighting	As shown unless, of course, if the fighting is a verb (she is in the war fighting insurgents)