



# Evernote Content Style Guide

Last updated: January 2023

**FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY**

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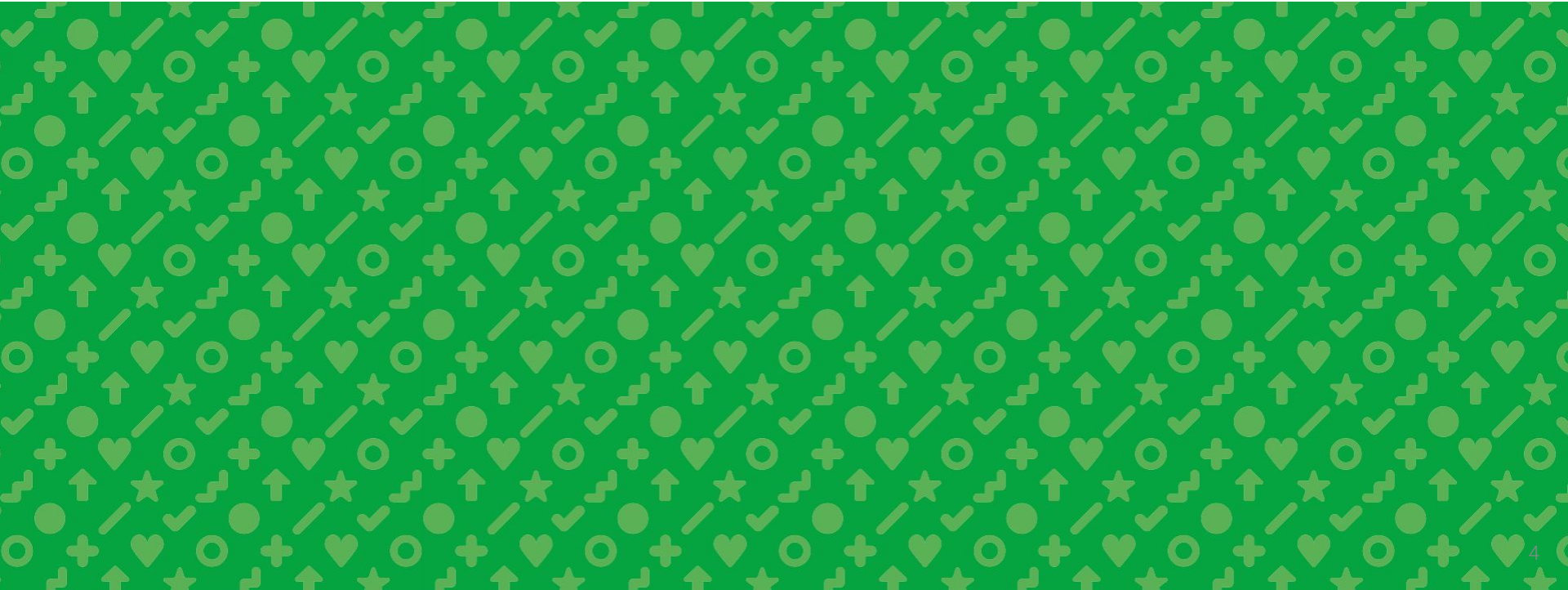
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# Introduction

Welcome to the Evernote Content Style Guide. It'll help you create content that's clear, consistent, and meets people where they are. Please use it as a reference when you're writing for (and about) Evernote.

We've tried to make this guide comprehensive enough that you feel confident writing for Evernote, without overwhelming you with information you may never need. This is a living document, which means it's continually evolving. If you're looking for something that isn't here or have a question about how to implement these guidelines, feel free to [reach out to the Creative Studio](#).

# Voice and tone



# What is ‘voice and tone’?

Our voice and tone is how we express our brand through words. The way we write and speak as representatives of Evernote has a huge influence on how people feel about us. It can mean the difference between creating a brand ambassador and losing a customer forever.

Our voice is our unique verbal personality. It should be consistent with, and true to, our brand. While our voice shouldn't change, our tone can (and should) vary to fit the situation—just as it does in our day-to-day lives. For example, you might use one tone when you're out to dinner with friends, and a different tone when you're in a meeting with your boss.

Got it. So what is Evernote's personality?



## Optimistic

We are hopeful and cheerful. We are helpful but not prescriptive. We believe that technology (specifically our own) holds the potential to improve our customers' lives.



## Clever

We are original and creative. We are smart but not pretentious; playful but not silly. We delight in finding innovative solutions to our customers' problems.



# 3

## Confident

We are sure of ourselves, independent, and brave. We are experts but not bossy. We speak our truth, honestly and straightforwardly, and demonstrate the courage of our convictions.

# 4

## Clear

We are concise, and effortlessly understood. We are informal but not sloppy. We use only as many words as it takes to communicate our ideas effectively.

# With everything we write, we strive to:

- **Empower.** Help people understand Evernote by using language that informs them and encourages them to make the most of it.
- **Respect.** Treat readers with the respect they deserve. Put yourself in their shoes, and don't patronize them. Remember that they have other things to do. Be considerate and inclusive. Don't market *at* people; communicate *with* them.
- **Educate.** Tell readers what they need to know, not just what we want to say. Give them the exact information they need, along with opportunities to learn more. Remember that you're the expert, and readers don't have access to everything you know.
- **Guide.** Think of yourself as a tour guide for our readers. Whether you're leading them through our educational materials or a task in the app, communicate in a friendly and helpful way.
- **Speak truth.** Understand Evernote's place in our customers' lives. Avoid dramatic storytelling and grandiose claims. Focus on our real strengths.

# TL;DR

All of our content—from error messages to email copy—should be warm and human. Our goal is to support and educate our customers, without patronizing or confusing them. Our highest priority is helping our customers remember everything, so they can accomplish anything.

**1**

**Optimistic**

**2**

**Confident**

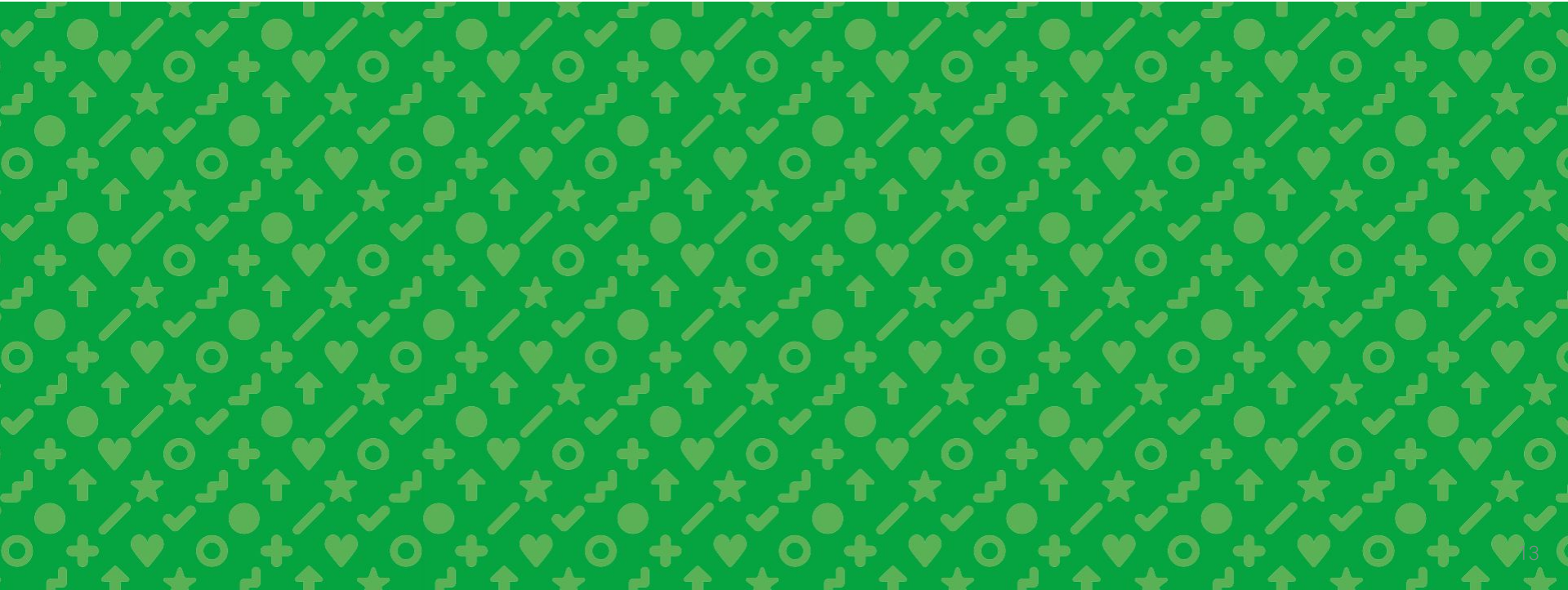
**3**

**Clever**

**4**

**Clear**

Company, brand, and product. What's the difference?



# Company, brand, and product

- “Company” refers to an organization that generates products and/or services.
- “Product” refers to something that is marketed or sold as a commodity.
- “Brand” refers to the image and ‘personality’ the company applies to a product.

When a company and its product share the same name, there are special considerations in how that name is used. We need to create a distinction between the company, the product, and its associated brand.

Whenever you use the word “Evernote,” it should be clear which of these you’re speaking about. The key to this is context...as we’ll see.

# Evernote Corporation

We use the word “Evernote” to represent our unique corporate identity, as well as our ownership of our products and services.

Most of the time, you’ll be referring to the product—especially in marketing or customer support. Guest bloggers and folks in PR or internal comms, however, may often speak about, or on behalf of, the company.

If you’re writing about both in the same piece of content, use “Evernote Corporation” the first time to distinguish the company from the product. After this initial mention, it’s fine to simply use “Evernote,” as long as it’s clear you’re still referring to the company.

Examples:

- Evernote Corporation develops products and services that help people to focus on what matters most. Evernote provides products where information can be easily captured, organized, and accessed.
- Evernote Corporation developed the apps Evernote, Evernote Skitch, and Evernote Scannable.

# Evernote as a brand

When we use the word “Evernote” as a brand name, it differentiates the products and services the company offers from those provided by others.

When Evernote is part of a brand name, it should be used as an apposition; in other words, directly preceding and modifying a noun. That’s a fancy way of saying we add the word “Evernote” to nouns such as app, Community, Personal, Teams, and so on.

Examples:

- Evernote helps you capture and prioritize ideas, projects, and to-do lists, so nothing falls through the cracks.
- The new podcast, Focus Culture by Evernote, can be found on iTunes and Spotify.



# Evernote as a product

The first time you refer to the product, use “the Evernote app” to distinguish it from the company and the brand. After this initial mention, it’s fine to simply use “Evernote,” unless doing so might create confusion.

- The Evernote app gives you the tools you need to keep your work effortlessly organized.

When referring to a specific product, always pair “Evernote” with the product name:

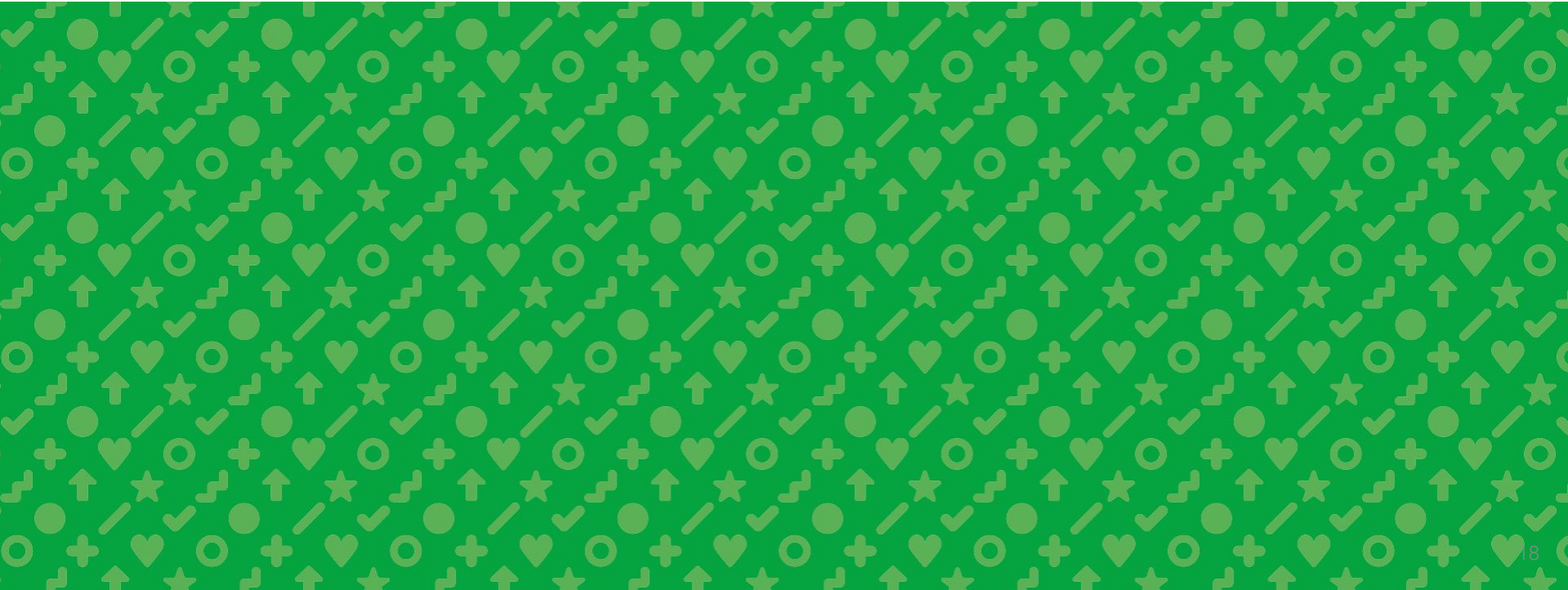
- Evernote Personal, Evernote Teams

When referring to a specific Evernote plan (Free, Personal, Professional, or Teams), always pair “Evernote” with the name on first mention:

- Evernote Personal

After first mention, it’s OK to use “Free,” “Personal,” “Professional,” or “Teams” on its own.

# Products and SKUs



# Products

There is a small but meaningful difference between a “product” and a “SKU” (for Stock Keeping Unit).

A product is a unique offering that is easily distinguishable from the company’s other offerings. It may be differentiated by the features it has or the purpose it serves. Current products Evernote Corporation offers are:

- Evernote
- Evernote Skitch
- Evernote Scannable
- Evernote Penultimate

(Note: Currently, we’re only actively supporting the Evernote app)

Evernote is always paired with the product name. For example, we never use “Skitch” alone, it will always be “Evernote Skitch.” Product names are the only names we trademark.

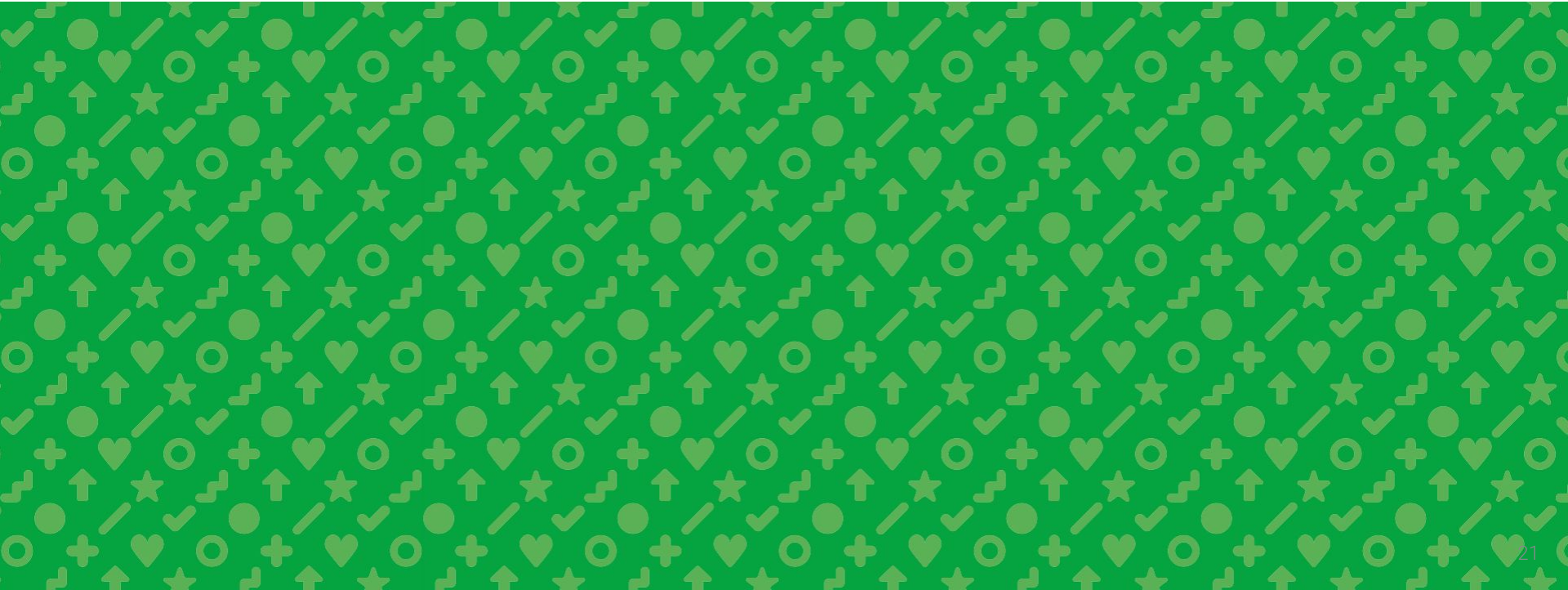
# SKUs

SKUs represent tiers/packages within a product that include different feature assortments, but which share a common (and often interchangeable) purpose. Current Evernote SKUs are:

- Evernote Free
- Evernote Personal
- Evernote Professional
- Evernote Teams

We always use “Evernote” before a SKU on first mention. After that, it’s OK to use the tier name alone. SKUs are always capitalized.

# Style tips



# The basics

- At Evernote, we follow [AP Style](#), although we can (and do) break the rules if needed for clarity or convenience. If you're in doubt, stick with AP Style.
- Our default dictionary and thesaurus for English is Merriam-Webster, which you can [access online for free](#).
- Evernote visual assets, including logos and fonts, are available for download from our [BrandFolder](#).
- As a companion to this guide, check out [Evernote's visual brand guidelines](#) for advice on the correct usage of our logo, colors, and typography.

# The Top 10 Things You Should Know

1. Some people will read every word you write. Most will just skim. Help everyone read better by grouping related ideas together and using descriptive headers and subheaders.
2. Write simply but not simplistically. A smart sixth-grader should be able to understand it.
3. Tell customers what's going on, clearly and concisely. Use short words and sentences. Cut the fluff.
4. Avoid technical jargon. Think twice before using internal terminology for product features. Will the reader know what you mean?
5. Be consistent. Stick to the copy patterns and style points outlined in this guide.
6. Spell out cardinal numbers (one, two, and so on) and ordinal numbers (first, second, and so on) below 10, but use numerals for numbers 10 and above (Exception: Numerals are fine in headlines, buttons, and subject lines).
7. Use contractions. They're more friendly.
8. The passive voice should be avoided if possible. (See what we did there?)
9. Don't write in ALL CAPS, unless it's specifically called for in UX style.
10. Use Oxford (aka serial) commas. In other words, a comma before the final item in a list of three or more items (that is, before "and" or "or").

# Tips for revising

- Read what you write out loud.
- Ask a friend or colleague to read it.
- Step away from the first draft. Revise when you're fresh.
- Run your content through a service like Grammarly or Hemingway as an extra proofreading step.
- If in doubt, leave it out.



# A word about the elephant:



While our brand logo contains a visual representation of an elephant—Mads—we never personify them. That means we don't write in their voice, and we never create content from their perspective.

# Dos and don'ts



# Exclamation points

## Do:

- Use in sentences that sound like an exclamation when you say them out loud or that communicate things customers will be legitimately excited about.

## Don't:

- Use to reprimand or scold. If you're not sure that the message will read positively, don't use the exclamation point.
- Use to add extraneous pep or to put a positive spin on a negative development.
- Use too many exclamation points!!! They're like high-fives: A well-timed one is great, but too many can be annoying. You get a maximum of one per dialog, screen, email, or modal, so choose wisely.

# CTA (“call to action”) buttons and links

## Do:

- Limit the number of link options in a single email or body of short-form text.
- Make the purpose of a link as clear as possible. A reader should have an idea of what’s at the other end.
  - In the phrase **Download Evernote and learn more**, link the words “Download Evernote” if you’re directing to our download page, or “learn more” if directing to a blog post or Help & Learning.
- Be concise in linked text. A minimum of two words and a maximum of five is plenty.
- Favor using first-person language in CTA buttons. For example, “Open my Evernote.”

## Don’t:

- Write **Click here** to find out more. Instead, write **Find out more** or **Learn more**.
- Use generic text such as **Go here** or **Do it now**. (What is “here”? What is “it”?)

# Lists

## Do:

- Start all items with the same part of speech (e.g., a verb, a noun).
- Structure each item similarly (for example, if one item uses an infinitive or ends in -ing, all of the items should).

## Don't:

- Use non-uniform structures (also called faulty parallelism). For example:

 Evernote lets you:

- Take notes
- Create tasks
- Web clipping

 Evernote lets you:

- Take notes
- Create tasks
- Clip the web

# Sentence case vs. title case

## Do:

- Use sentence case in almost all your writing, including sub-headings.
- Use title case for:
  - Blog headlines
  - Webpage titles
  - Menu titles
  - Menu options
  - Buttons, menu items, and toolbar labels (on Mac, iOS, and Windows)

## Don't:

- Always use sentence case.
- Or title case. (You get the idea.)

# Talking about customers

## Do:

- Use we/our for Evernote
- Use you/your for the customer

## Don't:

- Call users “users” to their face. We prefer to call them customers, even if they’re on our Free plan. For example, “Not a customer yet? Sign up!”

*One exception...sort of.*

When we’re speaking to Teams admins about their account, we can call the other people on their account “users.” For example, “Here’s how to add users to your Teams account.”

# Situational guidance

aka “How do I write for...”





# Situational guidance

Our voice should be consistent. However, circumstances dictate the specific tone we use. Evernote's tone is usually informal, but it's always more important to be clear than entertaining. Let's look at the differences in tone for different situations.

# Product/UI

In our products, we aim to give customers the information they need, quickly. We should be concise and straightforward, and always ready to help.

That doesn't mean we need to sound like a bot. Our products are made by humans, and it is fine to let some of our own personality shine through. A little humor can go a long way, but we don't use sarcasm and our customers should always feel like we're on their side.

For sign-up, welcome, and onboarding communications, we should be an encouraging, approachable expert. Customers should feel better about themselves for having encountered us.

**It's OK to be witty, but not jokey or snarky.** A subtle touch of wit makes writing feel more human. Trying to “be funny” undermines our professional tone and will usually fall flat.

- ✓ Update now to power up your productivity.
- ✗ Holy crap, are you living in history times? Update your app!

# Product/UI

For alert feedback in the UI, we are clear about what has gone wrong. We are specific and concise—but not sterile—using industry-standard terms. Our goal is always to communicate in a universally understood way using the least number of words.

Match your tone to the situation. The wrong tone can make us look greedy or uncaring, like we're scolding the reader.

Use positive rather than negative language, and offer solutions wherever possible. One way to detect negative language is to look for words like “can’t” and “don’t.”

✗ You can't sync this device on your current plan.

✓ Upgrade to Personal to sync unlimited devices.

✗ You don't have permission to view this note.

✓ Ask the owner for permission to view this note.

# Marketing

(For tips on writing specifically for social media, see [this slide](#) instead)

Our marketing communications are where our true personality can be expressed. We are helpful and encouraging, smart and confident, fun and sometimes quirky. We are people first, with our own struggles and triumphs.

We use strong, vivid, purposeful language, including active verbs. We like verbs that are tied to physical action, for example: lift, build, spearhead, capture, drive, hone. We use verbs and adjectives that include some emotional connotation or evoke a strong mental image.

We are clear and straightforward, without resorting to jargon or buzzwords. The most concise method of stating something is often the most powerful. Instead of "we are accomplishing improvement outcomes," simply say "we're improving."

# Marketing

**Give useful, practical advice, but don't be overly prescriptive.** Give options. One of Evernote's strengths is that it's flexible and platform-agnostic—we embrace individuality and choice.

✓ Try creating a notebook just for conference notes, or use a unique tag.

✗ You need to create a notebook called “October 2022 Conference Notes” and set up tags for each speaker and topic. That works for me so it will work for you.

**Use active words and avoid the passive voice.** Active verbs make for shorter, more direct copy that helps readers see themselves performing the action.

✓ Evernote for Android scans images using your phone's camera.

✗ Evernote for Android can be used to scan images which have been taken by your phone's camera.

# Sales and Customer Success

When speaking with current or prospective customers, we naturally match our tone to theirs. If they are informal, we can be informal. However, we should never lose sight of who we are and what we represent. The core attributes of our brand personality should shine through in each exchange: Optimistic, Confident, Clever, Clear.

We are mindful that we're not selling a product, **we're solving a problem**. Therefore, we focus on the pain points the customer is experiencing, and suggest ways that our product can help. We treat each customer as unique and look for the solution that will best meet their individual needs.

- Be concise. Half as long, twice as good. Attention spans are short. Extra words create distance between the reader and the meaning.

✓ Share your notes with a single click.

✗ It's incredibly easy to share one of your notes with the Share function and invite colleagues to collaborate with you on it.

# Customer Support

When addressing Evernote customers who have concerns, we are clear and thorough, both in our language and thinking. This is not the place for humor, this is the place for solutions.

Customers may be feeling frustrated, as they have likely tried (and failed) to find the answers to their questions on their own before contacting us. We acknowledge their frustration and empathize with their struggles. Our goal is always to clearly communicate the steps they need to take to resolve their issues.

Our tone is conversational. We find out what our customers need as quickly as possible, whether that is product information or an opportunity to air a grievance. We don't hide behind excuses or shift the blame elsewhere. If we have made a mistake we own up to it in a transparent, honest way.

# Customer Support

We match the energy of our customers. If they are contacting us for “how-tos” or advice, we offer it cheerfully. If they are unhappy, we take their concerns seriously and resolve them urgently.

Think about the customer’s emotions at the moment of interaction. You may be speaking to a person at a moment when they are confused or even angry at us. Empathy shows the audience we care about them, and understand their needs.

- ✓ Thanks for reporting this issue. We’re looking into it.
- ✗ Have you tried turning it off and on again? Maybe it’s just you.



# Social media

Social media is where our personality can shine. While very similar to the tone for addressing potential customers, we can be more playful. We can be wry but never gloomy—it's not in our DNA.

Our tone on social media differs by platform, but generally it's conversational, honest, helpful, inspiring, funny, playful (but not over-excited), and smart (but not pretentious).

We geek out over the best gadgets and methods for getting organized and staying productive. We share relatable tips, hacks and—let's be real—struggles, through graphics, quotes, and articles.

# Social media

We're approachable and use language that the average person understands. We strive not to use buzzwords like "collaboration"—instead, we'll say something more human, like "working together."

We're people, not robots. Avoid technical jargon. Use contractions for a more conversational tone. Conversational writing is more natural, more engaging, and easier to understand.

✓ Don't worry, Evernote can find handwritten text in images, too.

✗ Do not worry. Evernote's advanced OCR technology includes algorithms that can identify the shapes of handwritten characters.

# Social media

Our voice and visual expression should vary depending on the social platform and type of communication.

**Promoting positive earned media:** Humble, excited, and thankful.

**Responding to a frustrated customer:** Concerned but calm, helpful but not know-it-all, putting the customer at ease. We're confident in our ability to own an investigation—let's get to the bottom of this!

# Social media (by platform)

## Facebook

Focus should be on the consumer, not so much on us. It's real people talking, not an advertisement. We're speaking more to a 30+ age range, so less teen-speak. Style: coffee meeting to professional happy hour.

## Instagram

- **Feed:** Produced, high-quality photos, illustrations, or animations. Engaging text (asking questions, spurring action).
- **Stories:** Real-time, less-produced content and commentary. Liberal use of emojis, type, highlighting, etc. Style: coffee meeting to professional happy hour.
- **Reels:** Inspiring and educational short videos. Use emojis, highlighting, type, and high-quality visuals. A little bit more polished than TikTok (think professional happy hour).

# Social media (by platform)

## Twitter

Brevity is king. Audience is tech/media/educated folks.

## TikTok

TikTok should be young, unpolished, and straight-up. This should be the least-corporate of the Gen Z + Millennial set. Use emojis, text, highlighting, and other add-ons for flair. Style should be drinks with friends.

# Internal Communications

With internal comms, it's more important to be clear than entertaining. That said, we never suffer from stuffy corporate-itis. We are conversational and fun when we can be and cut-to-the-chase when we must. At all times, we make it clear to team members that Evernote cares about their well-being, by showing empathy and treating them with dignity and respect.

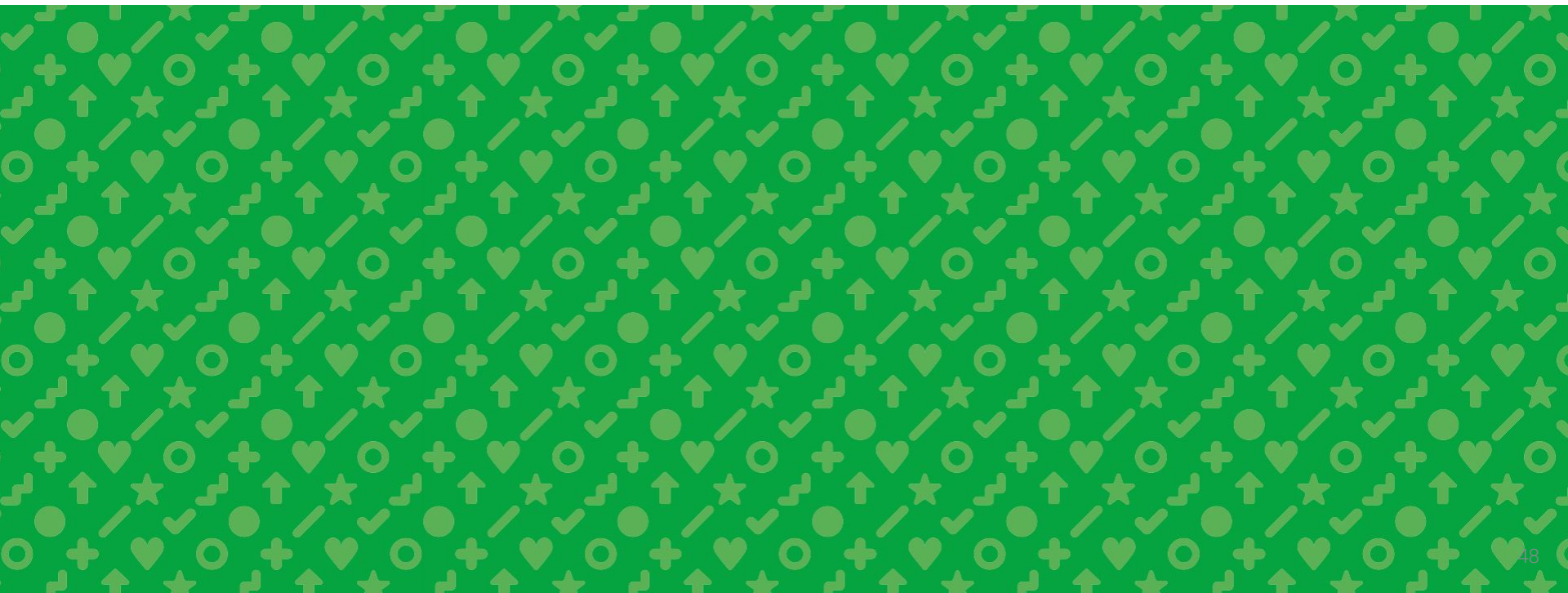
We value inquiry over advocacy. In other words, we seek to understand others and be open to their point of view. We always lean toward sharing information openly rather than being secretive.

# PR

For PR communications, readers are busy, so we get to the point. Readers aren't necessarily Evernote users or fans, so we use a slightly more formal tone than usual. As always, we stay away from jargon and fluff, unless technical terms are required in order to explain a new product or feature.

If we are sharing good news, then we can be less formal and allow more of our personality to creep in. If we are tackling a problem, we are straightforward and honest.

# Language, grammar, and syntax





# Evernote-specific capitalization

Products, SKUs, and features are usually capitalized. Things you create/do are NEVER capitalized.

ALWAYS capitalize		
Evernote Personal / Professional / Teams	Spaces (the feature)	Web Clipper (Note: It's two capitalized words; not "Webclipper" or "Web clipper")
Home	Tasks (the feature)	<i>Exception:</i> calendar (yep, even the feature)
NEVER capitalize		
annotate	link	sketch
assign	note / notebook	space
calendar notification	pin	stack
checklist / checkbox (Note: they're one word)	scan	tag
collaborative editing	scratch pad	task / recurring task
comment	search	template
dark mode	share	widget

# Evernote-specific terms

When we talk about our own product, we prefer some words and phrases over others:



Do say ✓	Don't say ✗
a note in Evernote	an Evernote note
add a notebook	join a notebook
Evernote basics	Evernote 101
“[Product] for [platform]” (e.g., Evernote for Mac, Web Clipper for Chrome)	[N/A]
check out (verb) checkout (noun)	[N/A]

Do say ✓	Don't say ✗
click or tap	press (Exception: use “press and hold” to describe how to initiate actions that require long presses)
create an account	sign up or register (unless it's in a CTA button)
create a note/notebook	add a note/notebook
Home in Evernote	Evernote Home
Tasks in Evernote	Evernote Tasks
recurring tasks	reoccurring tasks

# General terms



We prefer some words and phrases over others:



Do say 	Don't say 
email	e-mail, e-mail address
get the app	download the app
hover over	mouse over
in the app	on the app
internet	Internet
leave a space	delete a space (unless it's an admin action)

Do say 	Don't say 
menu or list	dropdown menu
OK	Okay or Ok or O.K. or O.k.
remove a notebook	leave a notebook
remove your email	delete your account (Note: the customer has to deactivate their account first)
right side or left side	right-hand side or left-hand side

# General terms

We prefer some words and phrases over others:

Do say 	Don't say 
screenshot	screen shot
sign in / sign out	log in / log out
sign-in screen	sign in screen
subscription or plan	tier
Support	support or help or customer support
sync	synchronize or synch

Do say 	Don't say 
tooltip	tool tip
top-right corner	top right corner or upper right corner
username	user name
web page	webpage or Web page
website	web site or Web site
Wi-Fi	wifi or WiFi

# Dates

## General

Abbreviate the month without a period. Don't use suffixes (st/nd/rd/th) on the day.

- Sep 2, 2022 (Exception: In long-form writing, spell out the month)

If numerals are necessary for space issues, separate them with a slash. e.g., 07/12/14

(Be aware that the American convention of month followed by day is not common worldwide. Consider implementing [ISO 8601](#))

For holidays, follow conventions. For example:

- Fourth of July or July Fourth
- Mother's Day
- April Fools' Day
- Christmas or Christmas Day (never abbreviate as Xmas or any other form)
- Hanukkah

# Dates

## Days and Months

Follow defined standards.

- Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat, Sun
- Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec

Exception: When space is stupidly tight (e.g., UI copy), abbreviate further (M, Tu, W, Th, F, Sa, Su).

## Decades

- 1980s, '80s, mid-'80s (Note: In this case, the correct mark is a single closed quotation (’), although most programs will assume you’re starting a quote and give you an open quotation instead. You can force the issue by typing Option + Shift + ])
- 21st century

# Numbers

Spell out numbers below ten and use numerals above. Exception: Always spell out a number when it begins a sentence. This includes ordinals.

- Ten new employees started on Monday, and 12 start next week.
- I ate three donuts at Coffee Hour.
- Meg won 1st place in last year's Walktober contest.

Numbers over three digits get commas:

- 999
- 1,000
- 150,000

Write out big numbers in full. Abbreviate them if there are space restraints, as in UI:

- 1k
- 150k

# Numbers

## Decimals and fractions

Spell out fractions, unless space is limited.

✓ two-thirds

✗ 2/3

Use decimal points when a number can't be easily written out as a fraction, like 1.375 or 47.2.

## Percentages

- Use the % symbol instead of spelling out "percent."

## Ranges and spans

Use a hyphen (-) to indicate a range or span of numbers.

- It takes 20-30 days.



# Numbers

## Money

When writing about US currency, use the dollar sign before the amount. Include a decimal and number of cents if more than 0.

- \$20
- \$19.99

When writing about other currencies, follow the same symbol-amount format:

- ¥1
- €1

# Numbers

## Telephone numbers

Use dashes without spaces between numbers. Use a country code if your reader is in another country.

- 555-867-5309
- +1-404-123-4567

## Temperature

Use the degree symbol and the capital F abbreviation for Fahrenheit.

- 98°F

# Punctuation

## Apostrophes

The apostrophe's most common use is making a word possessive. If the word already ends in an 's' and it's singular, you also add an 's. If the word ends in an 's' and is plural, just add an apostrophe.

- The donut thief ate Sam's donut.
- The donut thief ate Chris's donut.
- The donut thief ate the managers' donuts.

Some plural words may feel like they need an apostrophe when, actually, they don't. For example:

- To-dos (not to-do's)

Apostrophes can also be used to denote that you've dropped some letters from a word, usually for humor or emphasis. This is fine, but do it sparingly.

- How you doin'?

# Punctuation

## Colons

Use a colon (rather than an ellipsis, em dash, or comma) to offset a list.

- Erin ordered three kinds of donuts: glazed, chocolate, and pumpkin.

You can also use a colon to join two related phrases. If a complete sentence follows the colon, capitalize the first word.

- I was faced with a dilemma: I wanted a donut, but I'd just eaten a bagel.

# Punctuation

## Commas

When writing a list, use the serial comma (also known as the Oxford comma).

✓ David admires his parents, Oprah, and Justin Timberlake.

✗ David admires his parents, Oprah and Justin Timberlake.

Otherwise, use common sense. If you're unsure, read the sentence out loud. Where you find yourself taking a breath, use a comma.

# Punctuation

## Dashes and hyphens

Use a hyphen (-) without spaces on either side to link words into single phrase, or to indicate a span or range.

- first-time user
- Monday-Friday

Use an em dash (—) without spaces on either side to offset an aside. Use a true em dash, not hyphens (- or --).

- Assignable tasks—just one of our new Professional features—can help you manage your team.
- Austin thought Brad was the donut thief, but he was wrong—it was Lain.

# Punctuation

## Ellipsis (plural: Ellipses)

An ellipsis (...) can be used to indicate that you're trailing off before the end of a thought. Use it sparingly. Don't use it for emphasis or drama, and don't use it in titles or headers.

- “Where did all those donuts go?” Christy asked. Ian said, “I don't know...”

An ellipsis, in brackets, can also be used to show that you're omitting words in a quote.

- “When in the Course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, [...] a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.”

An ellipsis can also be used in UI copy to suggest that this action will require a subsequent action or choice.

- **Copy to...**

# Punctuation

## Periods

Periods go inside quotation marks. They go outside parentheses when the parenthetical is part of a larger sentence, and inside parentheses when the parenthetical stands alone.

- Christy said, “I ate a donut.”
- I ate a donut (and I ate a bagel, too).
- I ate a donut and a bagel. (The donut was Sam’s.)

Leave a single space between sentences.



# Punctuation

## Question marks

Question marks go inside quotation marks if they're part of the quote. Like periods, they go outside parentheses when the parenthetical is part of a larger sentence, and inside parentheses when the parenthetical stands alone.

## Quotation marks

Use quotes to refer to words and letters, titles of short works (like articles and poems), and direct quotations.

Periods and commas go within quotation marks. Question marks within quotes follow logic—if the question mark is part of the quotation, it goes within. If you're asking a question that ends with a quote, it goes outside the quote.

Use single quotation marks for quotes within quotes.

- Who was it that said, “A fool and his donut are easily parted”?
- Brad said, “A wise man once told me, ‘A fool and his donut are easily parted.’”

# Punctuation

## Semicolons

Go easy on semicolons. They usually support long, complicated sentences that could easily be simplified. Try an em dash (—) instead, or simply start a new sentence.

## Ampersands

Don't use ampersands unless one is part of a company or brand name.

- Ben and Dan
- Ben & Jerry's

# People, places, and things

## Storage capacity

KB, MB, GB

- Capitalize both letters
- Insert a space between the number and the multiplier, e.g., 200 GB

## Time

- 10:30 a.m., 3:42 p.m.
- The exception is at the hour, you do not include “:00.” For example, “9 a.m.”

## Other

- When quoting someone in a blog post or other publication, use the present tense.
  - “Evernote Teams has helped our business grow,” says Jamie Smith.
- Avoid using “etc.” Give another example or just cut off the sentence.

# People, places, and things

## File extensions

When referring generally to a file extension type, use all uppercase without a period. Add a lowercase 's' (and no apostrophe) to make plural.

- GIF
- PDF
- HTML
- JPGs

When referring to a specific file, the filename should be lowercase:

- slowclap.gif
- MCBenefits.pdf
- ben-twitter-profile.jpg
- ilovedonuts.html

# People, places, and things

## Names and titles

The first time you mention a person in writing, refer to them by their first and last names. On all other mentions, refer to them by their first name.

Capitalize the names of departments and teams (but not the word "team" or "department").

- Marketing team
- Support department

Capitalize individual job titles when referencing to a specific role. Don't capitalize when referring to the role in general terms.

- Our new Marketing Manager starts today.
- All the managers ate donuts.

Don't refer to someone as a “ninja,” “rockstar,” or “wizard” unless they literally are one.

# People, places, and things

## Names and titles

Capitalize the names of websites and web publications. Don't italicize.

Avoid spelling out URLs, but when you need to, leave off the 'http://www.'

When referring to books, movies, plays, poems, albums, songs, operas, radio and television programs, lectures, speeches, and works of art:

- **Put quotation marks around the names of all such works** except holy books and reference works.
- Capitalize all words in a title except articles (a, an, the); prepositions of three or fewer letters (for, of, on, up, etc.); and conjunctions of three or fewer letters (and, but, for, nor, or, so, yet, etc.) unless any of those start or end the title.
- Capitalize both parts of a phrasal verb: "What To Look For in a Mate."
- Capitalize to in infinitives: "What I Want To Be When I Grow Up."
- Do not use quotation marks around such software titles as WordPerfect or Windows; apps; or around names of video, online, or analog versions of games: FarmVille, Pokemon Go, Monopoly.

# Words and phrases to avoid

We strenuously avoid racist, sexist, or ableist terms in all our writing. Here's an incomplete list:

- blacklist/whitelist
- grandfathered
- slave/master
- deaf
- blind
- manpower
- my/your tribe
- spirit animal

Revise your sentences if necessary to avoid using gendered pronouns: For example:

 When collaborating with a colleague, make sure to invite **him** to any relevant spaces.

 When collaborating with colleagues, make sure to invite **them** to any relevant spaces.

# Resources

Here are some more great resources for anyone who wants to improve their writing:

- [Grammarly](#). You can either install the app or upload copy to the website. The free version is limited, but still provides handy insights like word count and reading age level.
- [Hemingway Editor](#). Learn to write like Ernest. Concise and direct. For free.
- [Purdue Online Writing Lab](#). Purdue OWL puts together free content writing resources and instructional material useful for building a solid foundation for freelance writing.
- [The Elements of Style](#). A free online version of the classic reference book by William Strunk, Jr.
- [Grammar Girl](#). Mignon Fogarty's friendly, quick-and-dirty tips for better writing.

For in-app writing, make sure you're familiar with the product platform style guides:

- [OS X Human Interface Guidelines](#)
- [iOS Human Interface Guidelines](#)
- [Android Style Guide](#)
- [Windows Style Guide](#)



# Appendix

