



This essay documents the Foresight Wiki content development guidelines. It is a generally accepted standard that all members should attempt to follow these guidelines, even though it is best to use common sense while doing so. In order to avoid substantive edit, the page has been frozen.

The **FORwiki Style Manual** is a set of standards for designing and writing FORwiki documents.

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General principles

The first principle of style is clarity and cohesion. Style and formatting should be consistent within an article, but obviously not necessarily throughout FORwiki as a whole. Even more, the initial formatting of an article should not be changed by another member of the FORwiki community without very good reason. In case of disagreement over the style of an article, the Administrator should revert to the initial style. Another principle is that many points of usage - such as the treatment of proper names - can be decided by the customary practice of the community. But the overriding principle of style is that articles should be written with clarity and concise. Avoid jargon, vague phrases, and unnecessary complexity.

Titles, headings, and sections

Titles

The following guidelines apply to the titles of FORwiki articles:

- Titles should match the article contents, and should not be too narrow or too broad.
- Titles should be nouns or noun phrases (nominal groups).
- Titles should be short?preferably fewer than ten words.
- Avoid special characters such as the slash (/), plus sign (+), braces ({ }), and square brackets ([]).
- The final visible character of a title should not be a punctuation mark, unless the punctuation is part of a name.

Headings

The following guidelines apply to the headings of FORwiki articles:

- Headings provide an overview in the table of contents. Change a heading only after careful consideration, because this will break section links to it within the same article and from other articles. If changing a heading, try to locate and fix broken links.
- Section and subsection names should preferably be unique within a page.
- Section names should not contain links.
- Section names should not explicitly refer to the subject of the article, or to higher-level headings, unless doing so is shorter or clearer.
- Spaced or un-spaced multiple equal signs are the style markup for headings.
- The triple apostrophes () **that make words appear in boldface are not used in headings.**
- A blank line below the heading is optional; but do include one blank line above the heading, for readability in the edit window.

Sections

The following guidelines apply to the sections of FORwiki articles:

- When linking to a section of an article, go to that section and leave an editor's note to inform others that the section's title is linked.
- Consider a preemptive measure to minimize link corruption when the text of a heading changes.
- Optional appendix sections containing the following information may appear after the body of the article, in the following order: (a) a list of books or other works created by the subject of the article; (b) a list of internal links to related articles; (c) notes and references; (d) a list of recommended relevant books, articles, or other publications that have not been used as sources; and (e) a list of recommended relevant websites that have not been used as sources and do not appear in the earlier appendix sections.

Capital letters, acronyms and abbreviations, italics

Capital letters

The following guidelines apply to the usage of capital letters in FORwiki articles:

- If uncertain whether to capitalize, do not.
- There are differences between the major varieties of English in the use of capitals. Where this is an issue, the rules and conventions of the cultural and linguistic context apply.
- Do not use capitals letters for emphasis. Where wording alone cannot provide the emphasis, use italics.
- In general, do not capitalize the definite article 'the' in the middle of a sentence.
- When used generically, titles of people are in lower case. When used as parts of a title such words begin with a capital letter.
- Standard or commonly used names of an office are treated as proper nouns.
- Religious texts are capitalized but often not italicized.
- Philosophies, theories, movements, and doctrines do not begin with a capital letter unless the name derives from a proper noun or has become a proper noun.

- Platonic or transcendent ideals are capitalized (Truth, the Good), but only within the context of philosophical doctrine; used more broadly, they are in lower case.
- Months, days of the week, and holidays start with a capital letter. Seasons are in lowercase.
- Names of regions are capitalized, including informal conventional names.
- Names of institutions are proper nouns and require capitals.
- Names of specific cities, towns, countries, and the like are proper nouns and require capitals.

Acronyms and abbreviations

The following guidelines apply to the usage of acronyms and abbreviations in FORwiki articles:

- Write out both the full version and the acronym at first occurrence.
- Acronyms, like other nouns, become plurals by adding -s or ?es.
- The letters in an acronym are generally not separated by full stops (periods) or blank spaces.
- Abbreviations formed by truncation, compression, or contraction may or may not be closed with a period; a consistent style should be maintained within an article.
- Do not use unwarranted abbreviations.
- Do not invent abbreviations or acronyms.

Italics

The following guidelines apply to the usage of italics in FORwiki articles:

- Italics may be used sparingly to emphasize words in sentences.
- Use italics for the titles of works of literature and art, such as books, paintings, films (feature-length), television series, and musical albums. The titles of articles, chapters, songs, television episodes, short films, and other short works are not italicized, but are enclosed in double quotation marks.
- Use italics when mentioning a word or a string of words up to one full sentence.
- Use italics for phrases in other languages and for isolated foreign words that are not common in everyday English.
- Use italics within quotations if they are already in the source material.
- Italicize only the elements of the sentence affected by the emphasis.

Quotations

The following guidelines apply to the usage of quotations in FORwiki articles:

- Preserve the original text, spelling, and punctuation. Where there is a good reason to make a change, insert an explanation within square brackets. If there is a significant error in the original statement, use [sic];
- Use ellipses to indicate omissions from quoted text.
- When a quotation includes another quotation (and so on), start with double quote marks outermost, and, working inward, alternate single with double quote marks.
- The author of a quote of a full sentence or more should be named; this is done in the main text and not in a footnote.
- As much as possible, avoid linking from within quotes, which may clutter the quotation, violate the principle of leaving quotations unchanged, and mislead or confuse the reader.

- Format a long quote as a block quotation; do not enclose block quotations in quotation marks.

Grammar

The following grammar rules apply to FORwiki articles:

- Each article should consistently use the same conventions of spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- Use specific terminology.
- Whether to use the passive or active voice depends entirely on the context.
- For the possessive of most singular nouns, add 's. For the possessive of singular nouns ending with just one s, there are three practices: add 's or add just an apostrophe or add either 's or just an apostrophe, according to how the possessive is pronounced. Whichever of the above three options is chosen, it must be applied consistently within an article. For a normal plural noun, ending with a pronounced s, form the possessive by adding just an apostrophe. For a plural noun not ending with a pronounced s, add 's. Official names should not be altered.
- Avoid words and phrases that give the impression of straining for formality, that are unnecessarily regional, or that are not widely accepted.
- In general, the use of contractions?such as don't, can't, won't, they'd, should've, it's?is informal and should be avoided.
- Use the appropriate plural; allow for cases in which a foreign word has been assimilated into English and normally takes an s or es plural, not its original plural.
- The Foresight Wiki does not prefer any major national variety of the English language.
- Foreign words should be used sparingly. Use italics for phrases in other languages and for isolated foreign words that are not current in English.
- Names not originally in a Latin alphabet?such as Greek, Chinese, or Cyrillic scripts?must be romanized into characters generally intelligible to English-speakers.
- Any person whose gender might be questioned should be referred to using the gendered nouns, pronouns, and possessive adjectives that reflect that person's latest expressed gender self-identification.
- Use gender-neutral language where this can be done with clarity and precision.

See also

[General Guide for Developing FORwiki Content](#)