



Demographic Research house style

Our guide for authors

General remarks

British/American English

Use as you prefer, but be consistent.

However, please always use double quotes (“”) for initial quotations, then single quotes (‘’) for quotations within the initial quotation (not the other way around, as would usually be the standard for British English). Additionally, divergent from standard British practice, commas and periods always go inside quotation marks.

Ex: Dudley contends that “this phenomenon cannot be subsumed under the category ‘subfecundity.’”

A note on section hierarchies

Please avoid “orphaned” subsections. It makes little sense for a section to have only one subsection – there should be at least two subsections within any given section, or none.

Ex:

2.	Factors	2.	Analysis
2.1	Endogenous factors	2.1	The impact of endogenous factors
2.2	Exogenous factors	3.	Discussion

Usage issues

General notes

- We prefer our authors to write about existing literature in the present tense (unless they are deliberately contrasting old research with new). [Parker and Gibbon conclude in their 2005 study of childhood mortality](#)
- We strive to use active voice as much as possible. Not every single sentence needs to be written in active voice, but too much passive voice obscures who the agent of the sentence/paragraph is and thus runs the risk of weakening your argument.
- Please have an eye out for “hyphenated” identities such as “African-Americans”; *DemRes* prefers “African Americans,” etc.
- Generally, please always strive for gender-neutral language.

Specific usage issues

Abbreviations

Use periods only when they are included in an official abbreviation. Most abbreviations – whether acronyms or initialisms – have none ([NIDI](#), [INED](#), [PAA](#)). Spell out new names in full at first mention, followed by the abbreviation in parentheses. Thereafter, use the abbreviation.

Use of “US” is permitted in adjectival form, but not to designate the country in the body text ([most of the US respondents](#) but [most of the respondents in the United States](#)).

Colons

If a colon is followed by a complete sentence that could, theoretically, stand on its own, start that sentence with a capital letter. Do not capitalize if the colon is not followed by a complete sentence (but just a list of items, for example).

Commas

DemRes uses the Oxford or serial comma – use a comma before the last “and” and “or” when listing three or more items ([Population, economy, and environment](#)).

Do use a comma after very long introductory phrases and sentences starting with “thus,” “therefore,” “subsequently,” and the like, but not after very short introductory or adverbial phrases ([In the past three years \[no comma\] we have seen...](#)).

Dashes

It’s safe to say that you will almost never find an em dash in *DemRes*. Page ranges and time spans take an en dash without spaces ([1890–1911](#)). Breaks, juxtapositions, or insertions in the body text take en dashes with surrounding spaces ([Ayeni and Olayinka also use ‘family visitors’ – another variant of itinerant registrars – to complement their sample.](#)). See also MATHEMATICAL NOTATIONS and HYPHENS.

“Data”

DemRes treats “data” as a singular noun. ([The data confirms Parker’s previous findings.](#))

Dates

Always use four-digit years.

- [1945–1947](#)
- [January 24, 1963](#) or [24 January 1963](#) (may be abbreviated in figure/table captions)
- [in the 19th century](#) / [the 19th-century trend toward](#)
- [1930s](#) (no apostrophe; not ‘30s)

Hyphens

Do not use a hyphen with the following compound words:

- compounds that cannot be misread ([high school](#), [real estate](#))
- compounds with an adverb ending in -ly ([randomly assigned participants](#))
- compounds with prefixes such as after-, co-, counter-, macro-, extra-, non-, pre-, re-, semi-, socio-, and ultra-. These compounds are written as one word. This rule is reversed if the prefix is being joined to a number, as in “[post-1970](#),” or to a proper noun, as in “[non-Ghanaian](#).”

Do use a hyphen

- if the term could be misunderstood ([different word lists](#) vs. [different-word lists](#)) or misread ([re-pair](#) vs. [repair](#)) or if the term expresses a single thought ([intellectual clearing-house](#))
- if the term has the prefixes ex- or self-
- if the term has two prefixes ([non-cohabiting](#))

- for compounds with a comparative or superlative adjective ([higher-order births](#), [lesser-paid participant](#))

See also DASHES.

Italics

Foreign words that are now part of the English language will not need italicization. If in doubt, check the current dictionary.

No italics are needed for Latin-origin abbreviations such as [i.e.](#), [e.g.](#), and [et al.](#) Periods are used, however. Please also note that commas should follow these abbreviations just as they would follow the phrases “that is” and “for example.”

Italics should not be used to emphasize portions of text.

Mathematical notations

We use en dashes for minus signs and to designate negative values. ([The overall value for this variable is -0.12.](#))

Numbers

Figures should be used for all numbers above ten, numbers that are grouped for comparison with numbers ten and above ([5 of the 12 respondents](#)), units of measurement, statistical or mathematical functions ([5% of the sample](#)), dates, ages ([the 5-year-old respondent](#)), specific numbers of subjects in an experiment, scores and points on a scale, and parts of books and tables.

Words should be used for numbers up to and including ten that do not represent precise measurements and that are grouped for comparison with numbers below ten ([five trials](#)), common fractions ([a two-thirds majority](#)), and any number that begins a sentence, title, or heading ([Eleven participants answered the questionnaire](#)).

Exception: If a sentence starts with a statistical function, then leave as figure (better yet, rewrite the sentence so that it starts with a word).

Do not abbreviate page range numbers ([171–188](#), not [171-88](#)).

In numbers of more than three digits, use a comma after every third digit from right to left. Also use a decimal point, not a comma ([1,000 women](#), [9,435,000 inhabitants](#), [6,789.8 square miles](#)).

Percent

Use the symbol (%) unless there is a real reason for spelling it out.

Quotation marks

See [BRITISH/AMERICAN ENGLISH](#) for general rules.

Additionally, use single quotation marks to draw attention to a word as a word in order to distinguish it from a quotation ([Bunshwitz’s use of the term ‘Oriental’ is problematic for several reasons](#)).

Racial/ethnic groups

DemRes has no hard and fast rule stipulating whether “black(s)” and “white(s)” should be capitalized. Please use as you prefer and check for consistency throughout.

Please always capitalize names of ethnic groups ([Hispanic](#), [Chicano/Chicana](#), [Latino/Latina](#), [Sinti](#), [Roma](#), etc.).

“Total fertility rate (TFR)”

While “TFR” is capitalized, please see to it that “total fertility ratio” is treated like a regular (sentence-case) phrase.

“They” as singular pronoun

DemRes accepts “they” (or its inflected or derivative forms) as a singular pronoun. We prefer the gender-inclusive singular “they” over the generic “he.”