

RSC Author Style Guide

updated 1/31/25

Authors submitting manuscripts for publication at the BYU Religious Studies Center should follow the minimum guidelines presented here. Departures should be made in consultation with an RSC editor. For further clarification on points of RSC editorial style, authors are encouraged to consult *The Chicago Manual of Style* (CMOS), the RSC Citation Guide (RSCCG), and the *Church Style Guide* (CSG). All three are cornerstones of RSC house style.

Manuscript Format

FONT	Use Times New Roman 12 point, left-aligned, black.	CMOS 2.9, 13
MARGINS	1" margins all around.	CMOS 2.12
PAGINATION	Insert page numbers at top right corner of each page.	CMOS 2.12, 20
SPACING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Double-space all body text (including block quotes and notes). • Use only one space between sentences. • Do not indent the paragraph following the main title and subheads. • Indent each subsequent paragraph with a first-line indent of half an inch. • Eliminate line spaces between paragraphs. • The first line of an indented block quote should not have an additional indent. 	CMOS 2.8–15; 6.7
SUBHEADS	Follow this hierarchy to distinguish the main title and different levels of subheads:	CMOS 2.22
<p style="text-align: center;">The Family Proclamation: The Secular and Spiritual Context</p>		Title: bold, title case, centered
<p>Prophetic Definitions</p>		First level: bold, title case, left-aligned
<p><i>Witnesses of its truth</i></p>		Second level: italicized, sentence case, left-aligned
<p><i>Inspiring others.</i> At the general Relief Society meeting in September 1995 . . .</p>		Third level: italicized, sentence case, run in

Date and Number Style

Format dates per US style (September 4, 2022) and avoid ordinals (April 15, not April 15th).	CMOS 9.33
Spell out whole numbers from zero through one hundred and any numbers followed by <i>hundred, thousand, million</i> , etc. Use figures for nearly all other numbers.	CMOS 9.2, 4–9

Inclusive Language

Use inclusive language to avoid irrelevant references to characteristics such as race, sex, gender identity, disability, age, appearance, and religion. Replace gender-specific suffixes with gender-neutral ones (e.g., <i>chairman</i> could be replaced with <i>chair</i>).	CMOS 5.258, 263–66
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Punctuation

Use a comma before the final conjunction in a series: red, white, and blue	CMOS 6.19
<p>Singular possessive nouns take an apostrophe and s:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Jesus’s birth Joseph’s seer stone</p> <p>Plural possessive nouns usually add an apostrophe alone:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">the Joneses’ home <i>but:</i> men’s club</p>	CMOS 7.16–20
<p>Use en dashes (not hyphens) for number spans (Option + hyphen on MAC, Ctrl + hyphen on Windows PC).</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">June 6–12 pp. 124–29 Moroni 10:3–5</p>	CMOS 6.82–83
<p>Use three equally spaced ellipsis points to show omission in a quotation. A period precedes the ellipsis when the preceding sentence is complete:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“Some seeds fell . . . upon stony places” (Matthew 13:4–5).</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“Thy friends do stand by thee. . . . Thou art not yet as Job” (Doctrine and Covenants 121:9–10).</p>	CMOS 12.59, 62

Church Usage

<p>Asterisks mark permissible exceptions to <i>CSG</i>-recommended capitalization for nondevotional, technical works aimed at the academy or at a wider audience than is usual, lest they appear overtly tendentious and militate against an author’s purpose. Bear in mind that capitalization can vary depending on the context and whether terms are modified or not.</p>	
<p>Avoid terms such as <i>Mormon Church</i>, <i>LDS Church</i>, and <i>Restored Church</i> in favor of the following:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">the restored Church*</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">the Church of Jesus Christ (later reference)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">the Church (later reference to modern Church)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Church* meeting</p>	CSG 8.35–38
<p>In referring to members of the Church, avoid the terms <i>Mormons</i> and <i>LDS</i> in favor of the following:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Latter-day Saints</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">members of the Church of Jesus Christ (or full name)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">members of the Church* / Church member* (later references)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">the Saints* (as in “the Saints in Nauvoo” or “today’s Saints”)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">the Saints* (as in the “Corinthian Saints”)</p>	CSG 8.39–41
<p>Avoid the term <i>Mormonism</i> in favor of terms such as the following:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Latter-day Saint faith; Latter-day Saint beliefs and practices</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">restored gospel of Jesus Christ</p>	CSG 8.35

<p>The terms below are a sampling of <i>CSG</i>-recommended capitalization (exceptions noted). For religious terminology not listed in the <i>CSG</i>, <i>The SBL Handbook of Style</i>, 2nd edition (2014) is a helpful resource.</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>allegory of the tame and wild olive trees</td> <td>kingdom of God</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Apostle (<i>but</i>: apostles and prophets)</td> <td>large plates of Nephi</td> </tr> <tr> <td>the Articles of Faith (<i>but</i>: the third article of faith)</td> <td>law of Moses; the law; the Law (Bible section)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Book of Moses; Book of Abraham (not in <i>CSG</i>)</td> <td>parable of the Good Samaritan</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>but</i>: book of Enos</td> <td>plan of salvation</td> </tr> <tr> <td>brass plates</td> <td>promised land</td> </tr> <tr> <td>celestial kingdom</td> <td>small plates of Nephi</td> </tr> <tr> <td>the Gospels; the synoptic Gospels</td> <td>tree of life (not in <i>CSG</i>)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Intercessory Prayer</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	allegory of the tame and wild olive trees	kingdom of God	Apostle (<i>but</i> : apostles and prophets)	large plates of Nephi	the Articles of Faith (<i>but</i> : the third article of faith)	law of Moses; the law; the Law (Bible section)	Book of Moses; Book of Abraham (not in <i>CSG</i>)	parable of the Good Samaritan	<i>but</i> : book of Enos	plan of salvation	brass plates	promised land	celestial kingdom	small plates of Nephi	the Gospels; the synoptic Gospels	tree of life (not in <i>CSG</i>)	Intercessory Prayer		<p>CSG 8.52, 57–59</p>
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<p>In RSC style, major theological events that are normally capitalized when following the <i>CSG</i> can be lowercased when they are modified, except in devotional works that usually strictly follow the <i>CSG</i>.</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>the Atonement</td> <td><i>but</i>: Christ’s atonement; atonement of Christ</td> </tr> <tr> <td>the Crucifixion</td> <td><i>but</i>: the crucifixion of Christ</td> </tr> <tr> <td>the Resurrection</td> <td><i>but</i>: Christ’s resurrection</td> </tr> <tr> <td>the Creation</td> <td><i>but</i>: the creation of the world</td> </tr> <tr> <td>the Restoration</td> <td><i>but</i>: the restoration of the gospel</td> </tr> </table>	the Atonement	<i>but</i> : Christ’s atonement; atonement of Christ	the Crucifixion	<i>but</i> : the crucifixion of Christ	the Resurrection	<i>but</i> : Christ’s resurrection	the Creation	<i>but</i> : the creation of the world	the Restoration	<i>but</i> : the restoration of the gospel	<p>CSG 8.58</p>								
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<p>Because many Church-related terms are seen in print with stylings not endorsed by the <i>CSG</i>, authors and editors will want to consult the <i>CSG</i>, especially chapter 16, on terms no longer in use.</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>April 2023 general conference</td> <td><i>not</i>: April 2023 General Conference</td> </tr> <tr> <td>copies of the Book of Mormon</td> <td><i>not</i>: Books of Mormon</td> </tr> <tr> <td>home evening</td> <td><i>not</i>: family home evening</td> </tr> <tr> <td>women’s session</td> <td><i>not</i>: general women’s meeting</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Young Men program</td> <td><i>not</i>: Young Men’s program</td> </tr> </table>	April 2023 general conference	<i>not</i> : April 2023 General Conference	copies of the Book of Mormon	<i>not</i> : Books of Mormon	home evening	<i>not</i> : family home evening	women’s session	<i>not</i> : general women’s meeting	Young Men program	<i>not</i> : Young Men’s program	<p>CSG 8.18, 20, 46; 16</p>								
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Quotations

<p>Authors are responsible for the accuracy of quotations. Modernizing the spelling, capitalization, and punctuation is permissible if (1) it is applied consistently throughout a work and (2) a note is included to inform the reader. RSC editors check all scripture citations but spot-check other citations. Authors should provide either a specific URL or publication data for any source not readily found online.</p>	
<p>The initial letter of a quoted sentence may be changed to capital or lowercase as needed to conform to the syntax of the surrounding text.</p>	<p>CMOS 12.7, 20</p>
<p>Use block quotations for quoted text of one hundred words or more (or shorter if there are other extracts, and easy comparison among them facilitates the author’s purpose). A multiparagraph block quote usually preserves the original paragraph breaks, but the first line of the first paragraph is not indented. The text following a block quote is indented only if it</p>	<p>CMOS 12.10, 22, 24</p>

constitutes a new paragraph; otherwise it receives no indent since it is a continuation of the text that introduced the quote.	
Use double quotation marks for quoted material and single quotation marks for a quote within a quote. Change any straight quotation marks (") to curly ("). Place commas and periods inside quotation marks.	CMOS 6.9–11, 122–23; 12.30

Source Citations

BOOKS	CMOS 13; 14
This section focuses on note forms. CMOS provides examples of bibliographic forms after its examples of note forms; the cross-references provided below serve a dual purpose. Neither form includes a place of publication for works published after 1900. CMOS 14.29–31	
<p>A first citation has full publication data (unless keyed to a reference list, abbreviations list, or bibliography, in which case even initial citations are shortened; CMOS 13.21). Begin this process again with each new chapter, even for works that were cited in full in earlier chapters. CMOS 13.22</p> <p>Russell M. Nelson, <i>Heart of the Matter: What 100 Years of Living Have Taught Me</i> (Deseret Book, 2023).</p> <p>Nelson, <i>Heart of the Matter</i>, 142.</p> <p>In notes, if there are more than two authors, give the first author’s name followed by <i>et al.</i> (This does not apply to bibliographies.) CMOS 13.23</p> <p>Charlotte Marcus et al., <i>Investigations into the Phenomenon of Limited-Field Criticism</i> (Broadview, 1990), 78.</p> <p>If no author appears on the title page, list the name of the editor, translator, compiler, or corporate author. CMOS 13.86; 14.5</p> <p>Stephen O. Smoot and Brian C. Passantino, eds., <i>Joseph Smith’s Uncanonized Revelations</i> (Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Deseret Book, 2024).</p> <p>The placement of an editor’s (or compiler’s or translator’s) name varies depending on whether a chapter or a book is being cited in a note or bibliography. The abbreviated roles such as <i>ed.</i> and <i>eds.</i> vary as well in placement and styling, with <i>edited by</i> replacing <i>ed.</i> in the last bibliographic form shown below.</p> <p><i>Notes citing a book</i> (CMOS 14.5)</p> <p>Lincoln H. Blumell, ed., <i>New Testament History, Culture, and Society: A Background to the Texts of the New Testament</i> (Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Deseret Book, 2024).</p> <p>Matthew McBride and James Goldberg, eds., <i>Revelations in Context: The Stories Behind the Sections of the Doctrine and Covenants</i> (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2016).</p> <p><i>Notes citing a chapter</i> (CMOS 14.9)</p> <p>David Rolph Seely, “The Temple of Herod,” in <i>New Testament History, Culture, and Society: A Background to the Texts of the New Testament</i>, ed. Lincoln H. Blumell (Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Deseret Book, 2024).</p> <p>Larry E. Morris, “The Experience of the Three Witnesses,” in <i>Revelations in Context: The Stories Behind the Sections of the Doctrine and Covenants</i>, ed. Matthew McBride and James Goldberg (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2016).</p>	

Bibliography citing a book (editor's name inverted) CMOS 14.5

Blumell, Lincoln H., ed. *New Testament History, Culture, and Society: A Background to the Texts of the New Testament*. Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Deseret Book, 2024.

Bibliography citing a chapter (author's name inverted) CMOS 14.9

Seely, David Rolph. "The Temple of Herod." In *New Testament History, Culture, and Society: A Background to the Texts of the New Testament*, edited by **Lincoln H. Blumell**. Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Deseret Book, 2024.

MULTIVOLUME WORKS

CMOS 14.18–22

The total number of volumes need not be given when citing a particular volume, especially when that information appears in a corresponding bibliography. *CMOS 14.20*

Journal of Discourses, 26 vols. (London, 1854–86).

Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses* (London, 1881), 21:132.

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon* (Bookcraft, 1998), 2:198–203.

or

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 2, *Jacob Through Mosiah* (Bookcraft, 1998), 198–203.

SERIES TITLES

CMOS 14.25–28

A series title (omissible if the book can be located without it) follows the main title and is set in roman font. *CMOS 14.25*

Wilford Woodruff, *Leaves from My Journal*, Faith-Promoting Series 3, 2nd ed. (Juvenile Instructor Office, 1882), 74, <https://wilfordwoodruffpapers.org/p/Pyz>.

Hugh Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment*, vol. 16 of the Collected Works of Hugh Nibley, 2nd ed. (FARMS; Deseret Book, 2005), 420–23.

REFERENCE WORKS

CMOS 14.130–32

Well-known reference works in physical formats use short forms. The word *under* (which now replaces *s.v.*) may add clarity but is not required. *CMOS 14.130–31*

Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th ed. (1980), under "salvation."

Alan K. Parrish, "Seventy: Overview," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (Macmillan, 1992), 3:300.

Contra *CMOS 14.131*, as a general rule, RSC style does not insist on revision or access dates for reference works consulted online. Further, easily searchable domain names are preferred over full URLs whenever possible (all such shortened URLs are tested for accuracy and ease of use).

Merriam-Webster, "prophet," www.merriam-webster.com.

Wikipedia, "Mormon Trail," <https://en.wikipedia.org>.

EBOOKS AND BOOKS CONSULTED ONLINE

CMOS 14.58–60

In citing page content from an ebook, the best option is to give a chapter number or section heading followed by the ebook format. *CMOS* 14.59

Adam Begley, *Updike* (Harper, 2014), chap. 2, eBooks.

Parley P. Pratt, *The Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt* (1888; Project Gutenberg, 2020), chap. 11, <https://www.gutenberg.org>.

MAGAZINES

CMOS 14.87–88

When citing a print magazine article as a whole, do not provide the inclusive page numbers. Add a URL (shortened if possible) when citing online magazine articles. *CMOS* 14.87

C. Shane Reese, “Becoming BYU,” *Y Magazine*, Winter 2024.

Steven C. Harper, “Celebrating 200 Years Since Moroni Appeared to Joseph Smith,” *Religious Education Review*, Fall 2023, 13.

Maddie Tolk, “How Can the Book of Mormon Help Me Understand What Happens in the Temple?,” *LDS Living*, April 18, 2024, www.ldsliving.com.

NEWSPAPERS

CMOS 14.89–93

Newspaper citations do not require a page number. *CMOS* 14.89

Deseret News, editorial, June 3, 2023.

Caroline Houck, “A Very Bad Year for Press Freedom,” *Vox*, March 29, 2024, www.vox.com.

SCHOLARLY JOURNALS

CMOS 14.66–71

Citations of scholarly journals (unlike magazines) include volume and issue numbers. Use a colon before page numbers and give an inclusive page range when an entire article is cited. *CMOS* 14.70–71, 74

John L. Sorenson, “The Mulekites,” *BYU Studies* 30, no. 3 (1990): 6–22.

Include a DOI in a citation if one is available. *CMOS* 13.7; 14.73 (examples)

Matthew Chalmers, “Rethinking Luke 10: The Parable of the Good Samaritan Israelite,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 139, no. 3 (2020): 544, <https://doi.org/10.15699/jbl.1393.2020.6>.

UNPUBLISHED MATERIALS**Theses and dissertations**

CMOS 14.113

Wendy Hamilton Christian, “‘And Well She Can Persuade’: The Power and Presence of Women in the Book of Mormon” (master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 2002), 60.

Alexander L. Baugh, “A Call to Arms: The 1838 Mormon Defense of Northern Missouri” (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1996).

Personal communications

CMOS 14.111

Wallace Broberg, oral history, interview by T. Jeffery Cottle, March 20, 1996, Salt Lake City, in author’s possession.

J. Spencer Fluhman, email to Reid L. Neilson, January 5, 2013.

Manuscript collections

CMOS 14.120–29

Samuel Russell, “Isaac Russell,” 42, Isaac Russell Family Collection, Vault MSS 497, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT.

Paul Doran to Charles B. Taylor, February 19, 1891, Charles B. Taylor Papers, Woodward Family Collection, 1851–1979, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.

SCRIPTURES

Place bare scripture references within parentheses in the body text, not in the notes. *CSG* 14.16

As a general rule, place parenthetical scripture references at the end of sentences or clauses unless doing so misleads (in which case place the reference immediately after the quotation or idea it supports). *CMOS* 13.29; *CSG* 14.16; *RSCCG* §3

Avoid using *see* references automatically with all paraphrases of scripture unless a discursive logic and context dictates their use. *RSCCG* §5

Spell out the names of scriptural works, including the Doctrine and Covenants. *CSG* 10.6

The Apostle Paul taught, “Charity suffereth long” (1 Corinthians 13:4).
(2 Nephi 10:11–12, 14; Alma 32; Doctrine and Covenants 6)

Specify the version of the Bible if it is not the King James Version. Subsequent references can be abbreviated.

(Matthew 15:3 New International Version)
(Matthew 15:4 NIV)

Rather than cite the Joseph Smith Translation in various ways per *CSG* 14.24 (which refers readers to the JST footnotes in the 2013 Latter-day Saint edition of the Bible, to the Bible Appendix, or to Herald Publishing House’s 1974 edition of the Holy Scriptures), RSC style prefers the following form for its readership:

(Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 7:1)

The entire JST text is conveniently found in *Joseph Smith’s Translation of the Bible: The Joseph Smith Translation and the King James Translation in Parallel Columns*, ed. Kent P. Jackson (Provo, UT: BYU Press; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2021).

CHURCH-PRODUCED PUBLICATIONS

Online citations are generally preferred for Church-produced publications.

“The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles,” www.churchofjesuschrist.org.
Hailey Adams, “What I Discovered When I Disconnected from Social Media,”
Liahona, March 2024, www.churchofjesuschrist.org.

GENERAL CONFERENCE TALKS

Direct readers to the general conference section of the Church website for conference talks rather than to the Church magazines (print or online), which date the talks a month after the actual conference dates.

D. Todd Christofferson, “The Sealing Power,” general conference talk, October 2023, www.churchofjesuschrist.org.

HYMNS

Eliza R. Snow, “O My Father,” *Hymns*, no. 292, www.churchofjesuschrist.org.

THE JOSEPH SMITH PAPERS

Authors and editors should use care in deciding whether to reproduce the technical transcription symbols in *The Joseph Smith Papers* texts or to omit them in favor of presenting more readable quotations. Deciding factors include the nature of the work and the author's purpose and preference. Consistency is paramount; a work should not mix the two approaches.

Online citations to *The Joseph Smith Papers* are preferred over print versions because the digitized content is curated, updated, and easily accessible. However, bear in mind that some *JSP* content is available only in the printed volumes, and authors may have additional reasons for citing them.

For online citations, use the **Cite this page** feature on www.josephsmithpapers.org to find source details. Honor *JSP*'s day-month-year date form but replace brackets around dates with parentheses and omit *p./pp.*, access dates, and the institution's name. End the citation with the general URL. Test each citation to ensure that the named item yields a successful search result.

Blessing to Orson Hyde, 15 February 1835, 151, www.josephsmithpapers.org.

History, 1838–1856, volume A-1 (23 December 1805–30 August 1834), 8 August 1831, p. 141, www.josephsmithpapers.org.

For print citations, references in notes can be shortened after the first full one. Note the use of *et al.* (“and others”) in the note form. *CMOS* 13.78

Note form

Revelation, 6 June 1831 (D&C 52), in Michael Hubbard MacKay et al., eds., *Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831*, vol. 1 of the Documents series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Dean C. Jessee et al. (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2013); hereafter *JSP*, D1.

Revelation, 6 June 1831, in *JSP*, D1:328.

Bibliographic form

MacKay, Michael Hubbard, Gerrit J. Dirkmaat, Grant Underwood, Robert J. Woodford, and William G. Hartley, eds. *Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831*. Vol. 1 of the Documents series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, edited by Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, Richard Lyman Bushman, and Matthew J. Grow. Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2013.

THE WILFORD WOODRUFF PAPERS

Follow *Chicago* in dispensing with *p./pp.* but honor the website's preference for capitalizing the item, e.g., *Journal*.

Woodruff, *Journal* (January 1886–December 1892), September 25, 1890, <https://wilfordwoodruffpapers.org/p/Y719>. [Cite the date of the specific entry.]

Phebe Woodruff to Wilford Woodruff, 6 October 1840, 2, <https://wilfordwoodruffpapers.org/p/Pxl>.

Though the website shortens the citation of Woodruff's discourses, we require the inclusion of a the full print source.

Woodruff, Discourse, March 26, 1882, quoted in “Discourse of Apostle W. Woodruff,” *Deseret News*, May 17, 1882, 256, <https://wilfordwoodruffpapers.org/p/Zwqg>.