

# CBO

## A Guide to Style and Usage



2013

*I feel strongly that our reports should be lucidly written and comprehensible to noneconomists. We should break with the ponderous prose of most official economic writing and aim at giving Congressmen themselves something they can actually read and understand. We should assume that the reader is an intelligent, well-informed person without formal training in economics (the average Congressman is a middle-aged lawyer who may or may not have had an economics class 30 years ago in college). We should not be patronizing or talk down to the audience, but we should avoid jargon and explain all the concepts as we go along.*

— Alice Rivlin, Founding Director of CBO, 1975



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## Preface

Since its inception, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has stressed the importance of good, clear writing. This guide to style and word usage, the fourth in CBO's history, updates the 1996 publication *A Style Guide for CBO*. It reflects the evolution of the agency's style rules and should be followed in all CBO documents.

The bulk of the guide consists of entries, arranged alphabetically, that answer the most frequently asked questions about grammar, punctuation, and word usage at CBO. In general, examples of correct usage are shown in italics, and examples of incorrect usage are shown in quotation marks. Entries that consist of a word or phrase without further explanation are intended to illustrate a term's spelling, capitalization, hyphenation, or lack thereof. Definitions of common economic and budgetary terms come from the glossary periodically published with CBO's *Budget and Economic Outlook*.

The style guide concludes with a section about footnotes and references that shows in detail how to cite many types of source material. The notable addition to that section is information about citing online sources (which were not widely used when the previous guide was published).

Unless shown otherwise in the style guide, the spelling of words in CBO documents should agree with the latest edition of *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (available at [www.m-w.com](http://www.m-w.com)). When *Webster's* lists alternative spellings of a word, CBO's practice is generally to use the first one listed. For more details about grammar, punctuation, and word usage than are contained in this guide, good sources to consult are *The Chicago Manual of Style* and *The New York Public Library Writer's Guide to Style and Usage*.



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# A

**a-** achromatic, atypical. See **prefixes**.

**abbreviations.** For information about when and how to use abbreviations, see the box on page 2. Some common terms and their abbreviations are listed separately and alphabetically in this style guide.

**acquired immunodeficiency syndrome.**  
See **AIDS**.

**across.** Do not use **across** to mean “between” or “among,” as in “The new program would avoid inequities across crop types.” Such constructions sound like jargon and are best avoided. **Across**, however, is an appropriate substitute for “throughout”: *Payments have been evenly distributed across the school district.* Also see **among/ between**.

**act.** Lowercase when not part of a formal title: *Referring to the provisions of ERTA, critics argued that the act would have grave repercussions.* Uppercase in shortened titles: *Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Budget Act, the Balanced Budget Act.* Names of Congressional acts are not italicized or underlined.

**active-duty personnel**

**active voice.** See the box about **Active and Passive Voice** on page 3.

**act/bill/law/measure/resolution.** A piece of legislation in the Congress is a **bill** until it is *passed* by either the House or the Senate; then it is called an **act**. A **joint resolution**, by contrast, continues to be called a joint resolution when it is *passed* by either House. Acts and joint resolutions become **laws** after passing both Houses of Congress and being signed by the President (*enacted*). Note that it is usually inaccurate to say “The Congress enacted a law.” Except in very rare cases in which the Congress

overrides a Presidential veto, enacting a law requires action by both the Congress and the President.

One exception is a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution. Before a constitutional amendment takes effect, it must be *approved* by two-thirds of both Houses and *ratified* by three-fourths of the states. Presidential approval is not required.

**Simple resolutions and concurrent resolutions** do not become laws when they are *agreed to*. Instead, they serve to express the sense of one House (a simple resolution) or both Houses of Congress (a concurrent resolution) or to accomplish housekeeping functions.

All of the types of legislative vehicles discussed above may be referred to as **measures**. The Congress *considers* and *disposes of* measures.

Also see **adopt/agree to/approve/enact/pass/ratify**.

**acute care.** No hyphen as an adjective: *acute care hospital.*

**ad hoc.** Not italicized. See the box about **Foreign Phrases and Abbreviations** on page 27.

**adjustable rate mortgage (ARM)**

**adjusted gross income (AGI).** Income from all sources not specifically excluded by the tax code, minus certain deductions. Personal exemptions and the standard or itemized deductions are subtracted from AGI to determine taxable income.

**Administration.** Uppercase when referring to the executive branch of the U.S. government: *one of the Obama Administration's proposals, a program carried out by several Administrations.* (Refer to a plan or budget of the Administration

## Abbreviations

Abbreviations are a useful tool to avoid repeating cumbersome names or phrases, but they require work on the part of readers to remember them, so use them judiciously. If a term appears once or only a few times in a document, do not abbreviate it. Also, try to avoid abbreviating terms of just two words, such as *budget authority*.

If a report is heavily laden with often-used special terms or names of organizations, a list of abbreviations can be helpful. Such a list can appear in a box early in the text; a longer list can appear as a glossary at the end of the report.

**Where to Use.** At first mention in the text of a document, spell out a name in full and give its abbreviation in parentheses: *the consumer price index (CPI), power marketing administrations (PMAs), the Congressional Budget Office's (CBO's)*. If a report is divided into chapters, in any chapter after the one in which the abbreviation was introduced, spell out the name at its first appearance, with no parenthetical abbreviation—*The Congressional Budget Office has analyzed the 2011 budget*—and then use the abbreviation freely. However, in reports with chapters that may be read independently, such as *The Budget and Economic Outlook*, spell out a name and include its abbreviation in parentheses at the first mention in each chapter.

Because appendixes and boxes are generally treated as independent of the main text and of each other, a name should be spelled out and followed by its abbreviation in parentheses at the first mention in each appendix or box. The same is true in a summary that functions as a separate chapter rather than as the first section of a report.

Once a term has been introduced, the full name, the abbreviation, or an informal reference (*the act, the program, the department*) can be used interchangeably for variety.

**Punctuation.** Although a few abbreviations take periods (*U.S., U.N., U.K.*), most do not (*NATO, ROTC*). Plural abbreviations take no apostrophes: *the GNPs of the United States and Japan*. Possessive abbreviations do take apostrophes: *DoD's report, the USPS's budget*.

**With Definite Article.** Whether to use “the” before an abbreviation is not established by any reliable rule. In general, an abbreviation that starts with a vowel (or with a consonant that has a vowel sound) takes a definite article (*the IRS, the USPS, the SBA*, but *OMB and EPA*); one that begins with a consonant usually does not (*CBO, HUD, DoD, VA*). The most important thing is to treat an abbreviation consistently within a document.

**In Tables and Figures.** Avoid abbreviations in tables and figures. If they must be used because of lack of space, as in a column heading, spell them out elsewhere in the table or in a note at the bottom. (*Note: CPI = consumer price index.*)

as *the Administration's plan*, not “the Administration plan.”) Lowercase **administration** when referring to the management of something.

**Administrator.** See **titles of office**.

**adopt/agree to/approve/enact/pass/ratify.**

When discussing legislation, using the correct verb is important. Congressional amendments, ordinances, resolutions, and rules are **adopted**, **agreed to**, or **approved**. Bills, acts, and joint resolutions are **passed**. Laws are **enacted**. Treaties and constitutional amendments are **ratified**. Also see **act/bill/law/measure/resolution**.

**ad valorem.** Not italicized. A term characterizing an excise tax as one levied on the value of a commodity rather than on some physical measurement such as the commodity's weight or volume.

**advanced/advance.** The adjective **advanced** is frequently used where **advance** is correct. **Advanced** means “far on in time or course” or “beyond the elementary or initial stage”: *advanced degree, advanced mathematics*. **Advance** means “furnished ahead of time” or “going or situated before”: *advance funding, advance procurement, advance guard*.

## Active and Passive Voice

To be readable, writing should mirror speech patterns. Thus, most sentences should be in the active voice rather than the passive voice. (The passive voice generally contains a form of the verb **to be** plus a past participle: “was said,” “is driven.”)

The active voice emphasizes the doer of an action (*George processed 12 applications today*). The passive voice subordinates the doer to what is done, or drops the doer entirely, and thus sounds either stilted (“Twelve applications were processed by George today”) or imprecise (“Twelve applications were processed today”—by whom?).

Notice the difference in clarity and strength between these passages in passive and active voice:

In 1981, the legislation was passed by the Congress, although the potential adverse effects of increased inflation and added pressure on interest rates were noted during the deliberations by a vocal minority.

*When the Congress passed the legislation, in 1981, a vocal minority noted potential drawbacks: the threat of increased inflation and pressure on interest rates.*

Use the passive voice sparingly—for example, when you want to emphasize the action rather than the doer or when the doer is unknown or unimportant.

**adverb placement.** When an adverb modifies a verb that includes one or more auxiliary verbs (such as *can* or *could*, *may* or *might*, *will* or *would*), the adverb should generally follow the first auxiliary verb for readability: *The subsidies would greatly reduce total revenues. She may actually have said that.* Do not confuse the placement of adverbs in this situation with their placement when they modify an infinitive; see **split infinitive**.

**affect/effect.** **Affect** is used primarily as a verb meaning “influence”: *The programs may affect low-income families.* (**Affect** also means “to feign,” which has little application at CBO.) The result of affecting is the noun **effect**: *Low-income families are likely to experience pronounced effects.* **Effect** can also be used as a verb meaning “to bring about, to cause to happen”: *The new law effected a change in participation.* Also see **impact**.

**Affordable Care Act.** This term refers to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111-148); the health care provisions of the Health Care and Education

Reconciliation Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-152); and, in many cases, the effects of related judicial decisions, statutory changes, and administrative actions.

**African American.** Never hyphenated.

**after-tax income.** *After-tax* and *before-tax* are preferable to “posttax” and “pretax.”

**agency.** Uppercase when referring to a specific agency by name: *the Agency for International Development*. Lowercase when referring to the same body informally: *projects funded by the agency*.

**agencywide**

**agenda, agendas** (pl.)

**ages.** Ages of people should be given in numerals: *7-year-olds, a 3-month-old boy, a worker who is 30 years old, people ages* (not “aged”) *45 to 50, women age 60 or older, the under-25 population*. Ages of other things should follow the general rule for numbers—spelled out below 10, in numerals above that: *three-year fight, a city that is more than 200 years old*.

**aggregate demand.** Total purchases by consumers, businesses, government, and foreigners of a country's output of final goods and services during a given period.

**agree to.** See **adopt/agree to/approve/enact/pass/ratify**.

**AIDS.** Stands for *acquired immunodeficiency syndrome*. AIDS is well enough known by its acronym that it does not need to be spelled out.

**aircraft.** Names of aircraft have hyphens after letters (*A-12*, *B-1*, *F-16*) but not after numbers (*C-5A*, *F/A-18E/F*).

**aircraft carrier battle group**

**air-defense radar system**

**airfield**

**Air Force.** Uppercase when referring to the U.S. Air Force. Lowercase when referring to the services of other countries: *China's air force*.

**Air National Guard (ANG), the Guard**

**Airport and Airway Trust Fund (AATF), airport and airway tax rates**

**airspace**

**air-support mission**

**air traffic control (ATC) system**

**air wing**

**all-**. all-around, all-day, all-encompassing, all-important, all-inclusive. See **prefixes**.

**alliance, allies.** Lowercase even when referring to *the NATO allies*.

**allot, allotted, allotting**

**all-payer system**

**All-Volunteer Force (AVF)**

**alternative-fuel vehicle (AFV)**

**alternative minimum tax (AMT).** A tax intended to limit the extent to which higher-income people can reduce their tax liability (the amount they owe) through the use of preferences in the tax code. Taxpayers subject to the AMT are required to recalculate their tax liability on the basis of a more limited set of exemptions, deductions, and tax credits than would normally apply. The amount by which a taxpayer's AMT calculation exceeds his or her regular tax calculation is that person's AMT liability.

**although/though.** These two words mean the same thing and are generally interchangeable. **Although** is the more commonly used of the two and is preferable at the beginning of a sentence. Also see **however** and **while**.

**a.m.** Stands for *ante meridiem*. Never use with "morning": *10:45 a.m.*, *at 9:30 in the morning*.

**amendments.** Lowercase when referring to an unratified constitutional amendment: *the balanced budget amendment*. Uppercase when referring to a ratified amendment if its formal title or number is used: *the Fifth Amendment*, *the 18th Amendment*.

**American.** If possible, avoid using the word **American**—as either an adjective or a noun—when referring to people in the United States, because all citizens of Central, North, and South America are Americans. An alternative is to use *U.S.* as an adjective and *U.S. residents* or *U.S. citizens* (if citizenship is important in the context) as a noun.

**among/between.** The rule seems simple enough: Use **between** when discussing two things, **among** when referring to more than two. *Rivalry has long existed between the two companies. Revenues were distributed evenly among the four states involved.* Unfortunately, enough exceptions exist to bedevil even the most careful

writer. The distinction to bear in mind is that **among** implies a looser, less direct relationship. **Between** should be used for more than two items if each item is considered separately. Therefore, it is correct to write *Talks between France, Germany, and the United Kingdom ended in an agreement to divide the responsibility among the three nations* or *Train service is available between New York, New Haven, and Hartford*. Also see **across**.

**analytic, analytical.** Synonyms that mean “of or relating to analysis”; **analytic** is a bit neater.

**and.** This conjunction may be used sparingly to begin a sentence within a paragraph. When used that way, **and** imparts emphasis. It is a poor way to start a paragraph, however. (The same applies to *but*.) Also see **comma**.

**and/or.** This usage is awkward and sounds too bureaucratic for CBO writing. Instead of “X and/or Y,” better options are *X, Y, or both* or *X or Y or both*. Also, in many cases, using *or* by itself conveys the same meaning. For example, *fiscal policy can affect behavior by changing people’s current or expected income* implies that fiscal policy can affect current income for some people, expected income for other people, and both types of income for yet others.

**annualized.** In writing intended for a general audience, *average annual* is clearer.

**another.** Means “one more of the same kind” and thus, in reference to a number, should be used only when repeating a number mentioned earlier. For example, **another** is incorrect in this sentence: “The cuts will reduce outlays by \$62 billion in 2013 and by another \$640 billion in 2014”; **another** would be correct only if the second number was also \$62 billion. With a different number, say *by an additional \$640 billion* or *by \$640 billion more*.

**anti-**. antiair, antiaircraft, antidiscrimination, antipathy, antisatellite, antiship, antisocial, antisubmarine, antitank, antitrust, but anti-inflationary, anti-intellectual. See **prefixes**.

**any.** In terms of subject-verb agreement, **any** follows the same rule as collective nouns: If what follows **any** is plural, use a plural verb (*Any of my friends are happy to go*); if what follows is singular, use a singular verb (*Check to see whether any of the cash is missing*).

**anybody, anyone.** These nouns take singular verbs and pronouns: *Anybody who enrolls in the auto club receives a decal for his or her car window*. When “his or her” proves too awkward, recast a sentence in the plural. For example, instead of writing “If anyone arrives before the meeting, he or she will not be able to park his or her car,” write *If any participants arrive before the meeting, they will not be able to park their cars*. The same rules apply to *everybody* and *everyone*. Also see the box about **Pronouns** on page 57.

**any-willing-provider law**

**Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)**

**appendix, appendixes** (pl.). Uppercase when referring to a specific section of a report: *see Appendix B*. Lowercase when referring to such sections nonspecifically or when there is only one: *in the three appendixes to this paper* or *see the appendix*.

**appreciation.** Gain in the exchange value of a currency.

**appropriation.** The legal authority for a federal program or agency to incur obligations and make payments from the Treasury. **Appropriations** takes an **s** only when used as a noun: *Those appropriations would permit HHS to expand the program*. The adjective form is **appropriation**: *the appropriation process, the appropriation act*. The one exception is *the appropriations committee*. Also see **spending/funding**.

**approve.** See **adopt/agree to/approve/enact/pass/ratify**.

**a priori.** Not italicized. Also see the box about **Foreign Phrases and Abbreviations** on page 27.

**Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR)**

**areawide**

**Army.** Uppercase when referring to the U.S. Army.

Lowercase when referring to the services of other countries: *Russia's army*.

**Army Corps of Engineers, the Corps, the Corps'**

**Army National Guard (ARNG), the Guard**

**around.** As a synonym for *approximately*, **around** has informal connotations. A better choice is *about* or *roughly*.

**as.** See *because/since/as* and *like/as*.

**Asian American.** Never hyphenated.

**assure/ensure/insure.** **Assure** means “to make safe or certain,” but it also implies the idea of “reassuring or giving confidence to someone.”

**Ensure** and **insure** both mean “to make certain,” but **insure** also carries the idea of guaranteeing against loss. The distinctions are correct in the following sentence: *The Senator assured the panel that the new provision would ensure that homeowners were insured against floods.*

**authorization.** A law that sets up or continues a federal program or agency. Authorizing legislation is normally a prerequisite for appropriations. For some programs, the authorizing legislation itself provides the authority to incur obligations and make payments.

**autumn.** Lowercase even when used with a year: *in autumn 2011.*

**average indexed monthly earnings (AIME)**

**baby-boom generation, baby boomers.** The cohort born between 1946 and 1964.

**bachelor's degree, bachelor of arts (B.A.), bachelor of science (B.S.)**

**balance-billing.** Always hyphenated.

**balanced budget amendment.** Never hyphenated.

**Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (Public Law 99-177).** Also known as the *Deficit Control Act* or *Gramm-Rudman-Hollings*. The law established specific deficit targets and a sequestration procedure to reduce spending if the targets were exceeded. It also set rules that governed the calculation of CBO's baseline.

**balance of payments.** Not hyphenated as a noun: *a crisis in the balance of payments*. Hyphenated as an adjective: *a balance-of-payments crisis*.

**barrels per day (bbl/day)**

**base-case scenario**

**based on/on the basis of.** Which phrase to use depends on whether the phrase is serving as an adjective (modifying a noun) or an adverb (modifying a verb). **Based on** is the adjective form: *CBO released a new cost estimate based on data from the IRS* ("based on" modifies "estimate"). **On the basis of** is the adverb form: *CBO estimated the cost on the basis of data from the IRS* or *On the basis of data from the IRS, CBO estimated that the program would cost \$27 billion* ("on the basis of" modifies "estimated").

Why is the distinction between the two phrases important? Consider the following sentences, which have different meanings depending on which phrase is used: *Courts have invalidated*

*state laws based on both types of preemptions* implies that the laws are based on the preemptions. *Courts have invalidated state laws on the basis of both types of preemptions* implies that the invalidation is based on the preemptions.

**baseline.** Always one word: *the current baseline, baseline projections*. A baseline is a benchmark against which the budgetary effects of proposed changes in federal revenues or spending are measured. As defined in the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, CBO's baseline is the projection of new budget authority, outlays, revenues, and the deficit or surplus into the budget year and succeeding years on the basis of current laws and policies, calculated following the rules set forth in section 257 of that law.

**base realignment and closure (BRAC).**

A process of consolidating or shutting U.S. military installations as recommended by the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission (known informally as the BRAC commission).

**basis, bases (pl.)**

**basis point.** One one-hundredth of a percentage point. For example, the difference between interest rates of 6.4 percent and 6.2 percent is 20 basis points.

**because/since/as.** Both **because** and **since** can mean "for the reason that." Avoid using **since**, however, when it could mean both "because of" and "from the time of." For example, *The soccer team has not won many games since its top scorer broke her leg* could mean either that the team started losing when the player was injured or that the team started losing because the player was injured. Similarly, avoid using **as** to mean "because" (as in "We left the party, as I was getting tired"); it sounds stilted and can be misread as meaning "while." Also see **like/as**.

**before-tax income.** *Before-tax* and *after-tax* are preferable to “pretax” and “posttax.”

**benefit, benefited, benefiting**

**benefit-cost analysis.** Synonymous with *cost-benefit analysis*. Whichever term appears in a CBO document should be used consistently throughout the document.

**benefit package** (not “benefits package”)

**beside/besides.** *Beside* is a preposition meaning “by the side of” or “in comparison with”: *Original estimates of Medicaid’s cost pale beside the actual spending.* *Besides* means “except,” “in addition to,” or “furthermore”: *No one is going besides me. Besides her other car problems, her rear tire was flat.*

**better off.** Not hyphenated after a noun: *The family is better off than before.* Hyphenated before a noun: *better-off families.*

**between/among.** See *among/between*.

**bi-/semi-.** When referring to time, **bi-** properly means “occurring in every two instances of a time unit” (*biweekly*, every two weeks; *bimonthly*, every two months). The only exception is *biannual*, which means “twice a year,” as opposed to *biennial*, which means “every two years.” In general, use **semi-** to mean “occurring twice in a unit of time” (*semiweekly*, twice a week; *semimonthly*, twice a month). See **prefixes**.

**bill.** See *act/bill/law/measure/resolution*.

**black.** Lowercase as a racial designation.

**Black Lung benefits, black lung disease**

**Blue Chip consensus forecast.** The average of about 50 private-sector economic forecasts compiled for the monthly publication *Blue Chip Economic Indicators*. The name *Blue Chip* is always italicized.

**blue-collar.** Always hyphenated.

**book-value accounting**

**Britain.** See *United Kingdom*.

**British thermal unit.** The abbreviation is *Btu* following a number (*378 Btu*) and *Btus* otherwise (*the Btus needed to cool a given space*).

**Brookings Institution.** In text references, lowercase “the” before Brookings; in footnote citations, drop it completely.

**budget.** A detailed statement of actual or anticipated revenues and spending during an accounting period.

Whether the adjective form should be **budget** or **budgetary** does not depend on any rule; rather, it is a matter of preference. Over the years, CBO has demonstrated a preference for the following usages, which should be followed for the sake of consistency: *budget analysts, budget cycle, budget deficit, budget outlook, budget policy, budget process, budget projections, budget scenarios*, but *budgetary challenges, budgetary cost, budgetary effects, budgetary imbalance, budgetary outcomes, budgetary path, budgetary perspective, budgetary resources, budgetary savings, budgetary shortfalls*.

**budgetary resources.** All sources of authority provided to federal agencies that permit them to incur financial obligations. Budgetary resources include new budget authority, unobligated balances, direct spending authority, and obligation limitations.

**budget authority.** Authority provided by law to incur financial obligations that will result in immediate or future outlays of federal government funds. Budget authority may be provided in an appropriation act or authorization act and may take the form of a direct appropriation of funds from the Treasury, borrowing authority, contract authority, entitlement authority, or authority to obligate and expend offsetting collections or receipts. Offsetting collections

and receipts are classified as negative budget authority. Also see **spending/funding**.

In text, spell out **budget authority** rather than abbreviating it as “BA.”

**budget deficit.** The amount by which the federal government’s total outlays exceed its total revenues in a given period, typically a fiscal year.

**budget function.** One of 20 subject categories into which budgetary resources are grouped so that all budget authority and outlays can be presented according to the national interests being addressed. There are 17 broad budget functions, including national defense, international affairs, energy, agriculture, health, income security, and general government. Three other functions—net interest, allowances, and undistributed offsetting receipts—are included to complete the budget.

Lowercase the names of budget functions:  
*Outlays for function 300, natural resources and environment, will decline this year.*

**budget neutral.** Not hyphenated after a noun:  
*The proposal would be budget neutral.* Hyphenated before a noun: *budget-neutral proposals.*

### budget-planning exercise

**budget resolution.** A concurrent resolution (adopted by both Houses of Congress) that sets forth a Congressional budget plan for the budget year and at least four succeeding years. The plan consists of targets for spending and revenues. Later appropriation acts and authorization acts that affect direct spending or revenues are expected to comply with those targets.

**budget surplus.** The amount by which the federal government’s total revenues exceed its total outlays in a given period, typically a fiscal year.

**budget year.** Never hyphenated. The budget year is the fiscal year for which the budget is being

considered. In relation to a session of Congress, it is the fiscal year that starts on October 1 of the calendar year in which that session of Congress began.

**-builder.** home builder, shipbuilder. See **suffixes**.

**buildup** (n.), **build up** (v.)

**bullets.** See **lists**.

**bureau.** Uppercase when referring to a specific bureau by name: *the Bureau of Land Management*. Lowercase when referring to the same body informally: *projects funded by the bureau*.

**business cycle.** Fluctuations in overall business activity accompanied by swings in the unemployment rate, interest rates, and corporate profits. Over a business cycle, real (inflation-adjusted) activity rises to a peak (its highest level during the cycle), then falls until it reaches a trough (its lowest level following the peak), whereupon it starts to rise again, defining a new cycle. Business cycles are irregular, varying in frequency, magnitude, and duration.

**business fixed investment.** Spending by businesses on structures, equipment, and software. Such investment is labeled “fixed” to distinguish it from investment in inventories.

**but.** This conjunction may be used sparingly to begin a sentence within a paragraph. When used that way, **but** imparts emphasis. It is a poor way to start a paragraph, however. (The same applies to *and*.) Also see **comma**.

**buy.** As a verb, **buy** is a short, good substitute for *purchase*, *procure*, or *acquire*. As a noun, however, **buy** sounds like slang (as in “DoD’s annual weapons buys”) and should not be used.

**by-.** bylaw, byline, bypass, bystander, but by-election, by-product. See **prefixes**.

# C

**Cabinet.** Uppercase when referring to the President's Cabinet: *a meeting of the Cabinet, a Cabinet member*. Lowercase when referring to other cabinets: *the British cabinet, a state cabinet*.

**calendar year.** Lowercase when not part of a formal title: *outlays for calendar year 2014*.

**Calendar year** is always spelled out in full, not abbreviated to “calendar 2014” or “CY 2014.” It is never hyphenated.

**cancel, canceled, canceling, cancellation**

**capital.** Tangible and intangible resources that can be used or invested to produce a stream of benefits over time. *Physical capital*—also known as *fixed capital* or the *capital stock*—consists of land and the stock of products set aside to support future production and consumption, including business inventories and *capital goods* (residential and nonresidential structures and producers' durable equipment). *Financial capital* is wealth held in the form of financial instruments (such as stocks, bonds, and mortgages) rather than held directly in the form of physical capital. *Human capital* is the education, training, work experience, and other attributes that enhance the ability of the labor force to produce goods and services.

**capital gains or losses.** The increase or decrease in the value of an asset that comes from the increase or decrease in the asset's market price after it was purchased. A capital gain or loss is *realized* when the asset is sold.

**capital income.** Income that is derived from capital, such as stock dividends, realized capital gains, an owner's profits from a business, or the interest paid to holders of debt. Compare with **labor income**.

**capital-intensive.** Always hyphenated.

**capitalization.** Terms commonly used at CBO and their correct capitalization are listed separately and alphabetically.

Resolve most other questions about capitalization by consulting *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* ([www.m-w.com](http://www.m-w.com)). As a general rule, capitalize proper nouns but not common nouns. Thus, capitalize the name of a specific agency, act, or program but lowercase later references to it (*the act* or *the agency*). Capitalize specific regional names (*the Northeast*) but lowercase general geographic indications (*western Missouri*).

In headings or titles, do not capitalize definite and indefinite articles (*a, an, the*) or coordinating conjunctions (*and, or, but, nor, for, so, yet*). Do not capitalize prepositions unless they contain at least four letters (*in, With, Through*) or are an inseparable part of a verb (*Five Steps to Clean Up Hazardous Waste*). Capitalize both parts of a hyphenated compound (*Long-Term Outlook, Project-Based Aid*) unless it contains a hyphenated prefix or suffix (*Anti-inflationary*).

**capital services.** A measure of the flow of services available for production from the stock of capital goods.

**carbon 14.** Like other names of isotopes, this phrase should not be capitalized or hyphenated.

**carbon dioxide emissions.** Never hyphenated. Do not use the phrase “carbon emissions” as a shorthand for emissions of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) or carbon monoxide (CO).

**carryover** (n. and adj.), **carry over** (v.)

**caseload**

**cash flow.** Always two words and never hyphenated: *a cash flow crisis*.

**Caucasian**

**CBO.** Takes no article, even at the beginning of a sentence: *CBO assumed those responsibilities under the amendments of 1982.* When discussing the agency's analyses and conclusions, use *CBO* and *its* rather than "we" or "our." For guidelines about when to spell out **CBO** and when to use the abbreviation, see the box about **Abbreviations** on page 2.

**Census Bureau, census data, the census**

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).** Takes a singular verb or pronoun.

**Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).** Takes a singular verb or pronoun. (The ampersand follows CMS's style for its name.)

**central bank.** A government-established agency responsible for conducting monetary policy and overseeing credit conditions. The Federal Reserve System fulfills those functions in the United States.

**Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).** Note that the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency is different from the Director of National Intelligence (formerly called the Director of Central Intelligence).

**cents.** See **dollars and cents**.

**century.** Lowercase: *the 21st century*. References to specific centuries are hyphenated as adjectives: *ninth-century artifacts*, *18th-century thought*.

**ceteris paribus.** See the box about **Foreign Phrases and Abbreviations** on page 27.

**Chairman.** Uppercase when referring to the head of a Congressional committee or other federal government entity: *Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, *Chairman of the Federal Reserve*, *the Chairman*. Lowercase in nonfederal references: *chairman of the board*. Also see **Congressional correspondence and titles of office**.

**chapter.** When referring to a chapter in a report, follow the style for **appendix**. When referring to a chapter of a public law, follow the style for **section**.

**chemical terms.** Do not capitalize or hyphenate names of elements or isotopes: *carbon 14*, *uranium 238*.

**child care.** Always two words and never hyphenated: *child care centers*.

**Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF).** Also known as the Child Care and Development Block Grant.

**Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).** Previously called the State Children's Health Insurance Program.

**Child Support Enforcement (CSE) program**

**circum-** circumlocution, circumnavigate, circumscribe, circumspect, circumstance, circumvent. See **prefixes**.

**Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).** An agency in the Department of Homeland Security that replaced elements of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. No need to add "U.S." before the name when introducing the abbreviation.

**city.** See **state**.

**civilian unemployment rate.** Unemployment as a percentage of the civilian labor force—that is, the labor force excluding military personnel.

**Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS)**

**cleanup** (n. and adj.), **clean up** (v.)

**co-** coexist, coinsurance, collaborate, cooperation, cooperative, coordinate, copartner, copayment, cosine, coworker, but co-benefits, co-op, co-opt, co-owner. See **prefixes**.

**Coast Guard (USCG).** No need to add "U.S." before the name when introducing the abbreviation.

## Cold War, post–Cold War era

**collective nouns.** Whether to use a singular or plural verb with a collective noun depends on the individual case. In general, if the focus of the phrase is on a unit (that is, if a sense of “oneness” predominates), use a singular verb: *A breathtaking collection of paintings is on display. The family is standing by the beleaguered Senator.* If the focus is on the items in the unit (if a sense of “more than oneness” predominates), use a plural verb: *A host of new laws restrict the chemical industry. The couple are taking separate vacations this year.*

Nouns such as *percent*, *majority*, *remainder*, *rest*, and *variety* are treated as singular or plural depending on the nouns that follow them: *Seventy percent of the students support the change. The rest of the building is unpainted.* When such nouns appear without an “of” clause, the number of the verb depends on whether “of it” (singular) or “of them” (plural) is implied: *Last year’s appropriation totaled \$27 billion; the majority was spent on highways. Twenty-seven of the 33 legislators departed this morning; the rest are leaving tomorrow.*

Having determined whether a collective noun is singular or plural, make sure that any possessives or pronouns agree with it. “The corporation is going to notify their shareholders” is incorrect.

**colon.** Use a colon after an independent clause to signal that what follows is closely related to the preceding clause. *Those patterns differ for the major commodities in U.S.-Mexican trade: grains, oilseeds, and dry edible beans.* The first word after a colon should be capitalized if it begins a complete sentence. *The implications of the delay soon became clear: They were not going to meet the deadline.*

In text, a colon should not separate a verb or a preposition from its object, as in “The obstacles we face are: lack of time, lack of money, and an

overworked staff” or “The doctor said I am allergic to: cats, dogs, smoke, mold, and pollen.” In such cases, omit the colon.

Slightly different rules apply to colons in displayed lists. See **lists**.

**comma.** Use commas to separate items in a series of three or more: *The candidate promised prosperity, jobs, and health care for all.* Also use a comma to separate independent clauses in a compound sentence: *The 3-month Treasury bill rate is expected to be 5.6 percent, and the 10-year Treasury note rate is projected to be 7.1 percent.*

Do not use a comma to divide parts of a compound predicate (two or more verbs that have the same subject), as in *Interest rates will drop this year because of the recession but will rise moderately in 2013*, or to separate objects of the same verb, as in *The President will focus on crime this month and on job creation next month.* In other words, do not put a comma before a clause beginning with *and*, *but*, or *or* unless the clause can stand as a complete sentence.

## Commander in Chief

**Committee.** Uppercase when part of a formal name (*the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure*), in almost-formal references (*the Senate Budget Committee*), and in testimony when referring to the committee holding the hearing (*I wish to thank the Committee for inviting me*). Lowercase when **committee** is used informally (*The budget committee agreed to take up the proposal*).

## Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC)

**commonwealth.** See **state**.

**communism.** Always lowercase.

**communist.** Lowercase in general references (*the communist system*); uppercase when referring to a specific party (*the Communist Party*, *he is a lifelong Communist*—that is, a member of the party).

**Community Development Block Grant**  
(CDBG, not “CDBG grant”)

**compare to/compare with.** Compare to points out or implies resemblances between things of a different order: *Life can be compared to a dream. The economy can be compared to a boat.* Compare with is used to point out differences between objects that are similar: *The Congress can be compared with the British Parliament. One defense program can be compared with another.* Most of the comparisons that CBO makes are of the latter type: *Compared with last year’s funding, this year’s budget request is much smaller.*

**compensation.** All of the income due to an employee for his or her work during a given period. In addition to wages, salaries, bonuses, and stock options, compensation includes fringe benefits and the employer’s share of payroll taxes for social insurance programs, such as Social Security.

**complement/compliment.** Use the first to indicate completing or supplementing, the second to convey praise or flattery.

**comprise/compose/constitute.** Comprise means “consist of” or “embrace.” The whole comprises the parts: *The Congress comprises the Senate and the House.* Comprise does not take “of”; the phrase “is comprised of” is incorrect. Compose and constitute mean “to make up” and are used when discussing the parts that make up a whole: *The Congress is composed of the House and the Senate. The House and the Senate constitute the Congress.* Also see **include**.

**concerning, regarding.** A better choice is *about*, which is shorter, easier to read, and means the same thing. See the box about **Plain English** on page 53.

**Congress.** Always uppercase, as are all variants: *Congressional, Congressman.* Use the definite article when referring to the Congress as a body (*the proposal now before the Congress*) but not in references to *a Member of Congress* or to *an act*

or *session of Congress*. The possessive is *the Congress’s*.

**Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974.** CBO’s mandating legislation. Known informally and on second reference as the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 or the Budget Act.

**Congressional correspondence.** CBO protocol dictates that in letters to Members of Congress, the term *Honorable* or *The Honorable* be used in the inside address: *The Honorable Scott Smith, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515.* In the salutation, use *Dear Congressman* (male House Member), *Dear Congresswoman* or *Representative* (whichever a female House Member prefers), or *Dear Senator*. For Members with special titles, use *Dear Madam Speaker*, *Dear Mr. Leader* (Minority or Majority Leader), or *Dear Mr. Chairman* (when addressing him in that capacity). For female heads of committees, contact their staff to find out their preferred manner of address (*Madam Chairman, Madam Chair*, and so on).

**Congressman, Congresswoman.** Uppercase when referring to Members of the U.S. House of Representatives: *The Congressman voted for the bill.*

**connote/denote.** These words are often mistakenly used interchangeably, but their meanings are distinct. **Connote** means “to imply” (as in the noun **connotation**): *The ambassador’s reply, though civil, connotes great annoyance with the prime minister’s words.* **Denote** means “to indicate” or “to mean”: *the humid days and rainy afternoons that denote summer in Washington.*

**consolidation loan.** Lowercase.

**consortium, consortia** (pl.)

**constant dollars/current dollars.** Not hyphenated after a noun: *The figures are presented in constant dollars.* Hyphenated before a noun: *a current-dollar estimate.*

**Constant dollars** measure spending or revenues in a given year in real terms—that is, by adjusting for differences in prices (such as inflation) between that year and a base year. The phrase “in constant 2009 dollars” is redundant; *in 2009 dollars* will suffice. **Current dollars** measure spending or revenues in a given year in nominal terms—that is, in terms of the prices that prevailed at that time (not adjusted to remove the effects of inflation).

**Constitution, constitutional.** Uppercase as a noun when referring to the U.S. Constitution; lowercase as an adjective (*constitutional amendments*).

**consumer durable goods.** Products that are designed to be used by consumers and that have an average life of at least three years. Examples include automobiles and major household appliances.

**consumer price index (CPI).** An index of the cost of living, produced by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, that is commonly used to measure inflation. The CPI-U is an index of consumer prices based on a typical market basket of goods and services consumed by all urban consumers. The CPI-W is an index of consumer prices based on the typical market basket of goods and services consumed by urban wage earners and clerical workers.

**consumption.** In principle, the value of goods and services purchased and used up during a given period by households and governments. In practice, the Bureau of Economic Analysis counts purchases of many long-lasting goods (such as cars and clothes) as consumption even though the goods are not used up. Consumption by households alone is also called *personal consumption expenditures* or *consumer spending*.

**continental United States (CONUS)**

**continually/continuously/constantly.** All three words suggest repetition but in different ways.

**Continually** refers to events that occur regularly and often. *The phone rang continually the day CBO released its economic forecast.* **Continuously** describes something that occurs without interruption. *During the filibuster, the Senator spoke continuously for 14 hours.* **Constantly** suggests that something not only occurs regularly and often but also has an immutable quality. *The tide constantly ebbs and flows.*

**contractions.** Do not use contractions in CBO writing unless they are part of a direct quotation or in the title of a work being cited.

**contrast.** Takes the preposition “to” (something opposite) or “with” (something different): *The day was hot, in contrast to the night, which was cold. This study contrasts the Administration’s plan with the Senate’s.*

**control, controlled, controlling**

**core inflation.** A measure of the rate of inflation that excludes changes in the prices of food and energy.

**corporate average fuel economy (CAFE) standards**

**Corps.** Uppercase when referring to the Marine Corps or the Army Corps of Engineers: *The most important mission of the Corps is amphibious assault.* Lowercase when referring to a military unit: *The Army has four corps and 18 divisions.* Note that **corps** can be singular or plural. The possessive is *corps’* (as in *Marine Corps’*).

**cost-benefit analysis.** Synonymous with *benefit-cost analysis*. Whichever term appears in a CBO document should be used consistently throughout the document.

**cost-conscious.** Always hyphenated.

**cost containment.** Never hyphenated: *cost containment provisions.*

**cost control.** Never hyphenated: *cost control measures.*

**cost-effective, cost-effectiveness.** Always hyphenated.

**cost of living.** Not hyphenated as a noun: *an increase in the cost of living*. Hyphenated as an adjective: *a cost-of-living increase*.

**cost-of-living adjustment (COLA).** An annual increase in payments (such as Social Security benefits) to reflect inflation.

**cost sharing.** Not hyphenated as a noun: *the provisions for cost sharing*. Hyphenated as an adjective: *cost-sharing arrangements*. The same rule applies to *cost recovery*.

**counter-**. counterargument, counterattack, counterbalance, counterintelligence, countermeasure, counteroffensive, counterpart, counterproductive, counterproposal, counterrevolution, countersign, countervailing. See **prefixes**.

**countercyclical.** Acting to moderate the ups and downs of the business cycle.

**county.** See **state**.

**court cases.** Names of court cases should be in italics, with *versus* abbreviated and also in italics: *National Cable Television Association v. United States*. Mentions of court cases in text should include the court that decided the case and the year of the decision. For information about citing court decisions in footnotes, see page 93 in the section about **Footnotes and References**.

**courts.** Capitalize the names of courts: *Supreme Court, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, U.S. District Court, International Court of Justice (the World Court)*. Also capitalize **Court** when referring to the Supreme Court or the World Court (*the Court's decision about individual mandates*). Lowercase **court** in second references to other courts or in general references (*She is going to court*).

**cover-up (n.), cover up (v.)**

**CPI.** See **consumer price index**.

**credit crunch.** A significant, temporary decline in the normal supply of credit.

**credit reform.** A system of budgeting and accounting for federal credit activities that focuses on the cost of the subsidies conveyed in federal loans and loan guarantees. The system was established by the Federal Credit Reform Act of 1990 and took effect at the beginning of fiscal year 1992.

**crisis, crises (pl.)**

**criterion, criteria (pl.)**

**cross-**. cross-cultural, crosscutting, cross-price elasticity, cross-purposes, cross-reference (n. and v.), cross section (n.), cross-section (v.), cross-subsidy, cross-tabulation.

**current-account balance.** A summary measure of a country's current transactions with the rest of the world, including net exports, net unilateral transfers, and net factor income (primarily, the capital income from foreign property received by residents of a country, offset by the capital income from property in that country flowing to residents of foreign countries).

**current dollars.** See **constant dollars/current dollars**.

**current law.** Not hyphenated after a noun: *policies under current law*. Hyphenated before a noun: *current-law revenues*.

**current-period loan**

**Current Population Survey (CPS).** A survey conducted monthly by the Census Bureau. See **household survey**.

**current-services budget**

**current-year cost**

**Customs and Border Protection (CBP).**

An agency in the Department of Homeland Security that replaced the Border Patrol and elements of the Customs Service.

**cyclical deficit or surplus.** The part of the federal budget deficit or surplus that results from the business cycle. The cyclical component reflects the way in which the deficit or surplus automatically decreases or increases during economic expansions or recessions.

**cyclically adjusted deficit or surplus.** The federal budget deficit or surplus that would occur under current law if the influence of the business cycle was removed—that is, if the economy operated at its potential gross domestic product.

# D

**dangling modifier.** This mistake occurs when a phrase (generally at the beginning of a sentence) does not properly modify the noun that follows it—for example, “One of the oldest in America, this year was the most profitable in the company’s history” or “Because of its reputation for impartiality, CBO’s name has become a byword for quality.” In the first example, the year was not one of the oldest, and in the second, CBO’s name does not have a reputation. Rewrite such sentences for clarity: *One of the oldest in America, the company enjoyed the most profitable year in its history in 2010. Because of CBO’s reputation for impartiality, its name has become a byword for quality.*

**dashes.** An **em dash** (—) or a pair of em dashes is used to show a greater separation than is indicated by a comma or to make a parenthetical clause less separate than the use of parentheses would imply: *The annual costs to the U.S. government are likely to be modest—several million dollars at most. Carrying out periodic inspections—perhaps two or three per site each year—could significantly deter fraud.* To prevent confusion, never use more than a single em dash or a pair of em dashes in a sentence.

An **en dash** (–) should be used instead of a hyphen for ranges of page numbers and dates: *pp. 645–688; the 2008–2018 period.* See **ranges**. An en dash is also used in compound adjectives as a substitute for “to” (*the Berlin–Baghdad Railway*) or if at least one element of the compound is a multiword phrase, whether hyphenated or not (*the New Mexico–Arizona border, a government–private-industry initiative*).

Note that with em dashes and en dashes alike, there is no space between the dash and the text around it.

**data** (pl.), **datum** (sing.). The word **data** always takes a plural verb at CBO: *Better data are available.*

**data-** database, but data set.

**dates.** When a report intersperses calendar and fiscal years, specify in the text which is meant. If there is little mixing, a note at the front of the report usually suffices.

Years are always written out in full: *1979* (not “79”), *the 1990s* (not “the ’90s”), *the period from 2007 to 2015, the 2007–2015 period* (not “the 2007–15 period”).

The correct CBO style for expressing a precise date is *October 1, 2011*. A comma is needed after the day and after the year if the sentence continues: *The memorandum dated October 1, 2011, will clarify the matter.* No comma is needed between a month and year written together without a day: *the October 2011 meeting.* But a comma is needed afterward when such a date is part of an introductory clause: *In January 2012, a pay increase will take effect.*

Plural dates do not take an apostrophe: *the 1980s, the 1800s.*

**day care.** Always two words and never hyphenated: *day care center.*

**debt.** In the case of the federal government, the total value of outstanding bills, notes, bonds, and other debt instruments issued by the Treasury and other federal agencies. *Debt held by the public* consists mainly of securities that the Treasury issues to raise cash to fund the operations and pay off the maturing liabilities of the federal government that tax revenues are insufficient to cover. Such debt is held by outside investors, including the Federal Reserve System. Other measures include *debt held by government accounts* (debt issued for internal

government transactions, to trust funds and other federal accounts, and not traded in capital markets), *gross federal debt* (the sum of debt held by the public and debt held by government accounts), and *debt subject to limit* (that is, debt subject to a statutory ceiling that applies to gross federal debt, except for a small portion of the debt issued by the Treasury and the small amount of debt issued by other federal agencies, such as the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Postal Service). Securities issued by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac are not included in any of those measures of debt.

**debt service.** Payment of scheduled interest obligations on outstanding debt. As used in some CBO reports, **debt service** refers to a change in interest payments resulting from a change in estimates of the deficit or surplus. Hyphenated as an adjective: *debt-service costs*.

**decade.** Usually given in numerals followed by *s* (no apostrophe): *the 1960s, the mid-1990s*.

**decimals.** For numbers less than one, put a zero before the decimal point (*0.32 percent*) except for quantities that never exceed one (*.57 coefficient of correlation, a probability of .95*).

Numbers in text or tables are seldom carried to more than two decimal places. Only if an important subtlety would be lost in rounding is the use of three or more places justified.

Whether a decimal point and a zero follow a whole number (*17.0* or *17*) depends on the significance. For example, a whole number in a series that includes decimal fractions should be followed by a decimal point and a zero if the whole number and the decimal fraction denote the same level of significance: *Revenues are projected to equal 18.8 percent of GDP in fiscal year 2012, rising gradually to 20.0 percent in 2018*.

**decisionmaker, decisionmaking**

**de-emphasize**

**de facto.** Not italicized. Also see the box about **Foreign Phrases and Abbreviations** on page 27.

**deficit.** See **budget deficit**.

**Deficit Control Act.** See **Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985**.

**deficit neutral.** Not hyphenated after a noun: *The proposal would be deficit neutral*. Hyphenated before a noun: *deficit-neutral proposal*.

**deficit reduction.** Never hyphenated: *deficit reduction measures*.

**defined benefit plan, defined contribution plan.** Never hyphenated.

**deflation.** A persistent drop in prices that is so broadly based that general indexes of prices, such as the consumer price index, register continuing declines. Deflation is usually caused by a collapse in aggregate demand.

**de minimis.** See the box about **Foreign Phrases and Abbreviations** on page 27.

**denote.** See **connote/denote**.

**de novo.** See the box about **Foreign Phrases and Abbreviations** on page 27.

**department.** Uppercase when referring to a specific department by name: *the Department of Education*. Lowercase when referring to the same body informally: *projects funded by the department*.

**Department of Agriculture (USDA).** No need to add “U.S.” before the name when introducing the abbreviation.

**Department of Defense (DoD).** In capitalized headings, the *o* in DoD is lowercase.

**Department of Energy (DOE)**

**Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**

**Department of Veterans Affairs.** Note that **Veterans** does not have an apostrophe. The preferred form of the department's abbreviation is VA, not "the VA." The department replaced the Veterans Administration in 1988. The two main components are the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and the Veterans Health Administration (VHA).

**deposit insurance.** The guarantee by a federal agency that an individual depositor at a participating depository institution will receive the full amount of the deposit (currently up to \$250,000) if the institution becomes insolvent.

**depository institutions.** Financial intermediaries that make loans to borrowers and obtain funds from savers by accepting deposits. Depository institutions include commercial banks, savings and loan institutions, mutual savings banks, and credit unions.

**depreciation.** A decline in the value of a currency, financial asset, or capital good. When applied to a capital good, depreciation usually refers to loss of value because of obsolescence, wear, or destruction.

**depression.** Lowercase in general references: *when the economy is in a depression*. Uppercase when referring to the one that began in 1929: *the Depression, the Great Depression*.

**devaluation.** The act of a government to lower the fixed exchange rate of its currency.

**diagnosis-related group (DRG)**

**different from/different than.** The preferred phrase is generally **different from**: *The Senate's version of the bill is different from that of the House*. But in clauses that require the writer to use "from that which" or even more elaborate constructions, **different than** is preferable: *How different things appear in Washington than in London*.

**Director.** See **titles of office**.

**direct spending.** No hyphen as an adjective: *direct spending provision*. Synonymous with **mandatory spending**, direct spending is the budget authority provided by laws other than appropriation acts and the outlays that result from that budget authority. See **spending/funding**.

**direct student loan.** See **William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program**.

**dis-**. disaggregate, disinterested, disintermediation, dissimilar. See **prefixes**.

**Disability Insurance (DI) Trust Fund, the DI trust fund.** One of the trust funds for Social Security. The other is the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund.

**discount rate.** The interest rate that the Federal Reserve System charges on a loan it makes to a bank through its so-called discount window. Such loans, when allowed, enable a bank to meet its reserve requirements without reducing its lending. Alternatively, the discount rate is the interest rate used to compute the present value of future income or payments. See **present value**.

**discouraged workers.** Jobless people who are available for work but are not actively seeking it because they think they have poor prospects of finding a job. Discouraged workers are not included in measures of the labor force or the unemployment rate.

**discretionary spending.** Budget authority that is provided and controlled by appropriation acts and the outlays resulting from that budget authority. When referring only to such budget authority, it is better to say *discretionary appropriations* or *discretionary funding* than "discretionary spending." See **spending/funding**.

**discretionary spending caps.** Statutory limits on the amount of budget authority or outlays provided in appropriation acts in a fiscal year.

**disposable personal income.** Personal income—the income that people receive, including transfer payments—minus the taxes and fees that people pay to governments.

**disproportionate share adjustment, disproportionate share hospital (DSH) payment**

**dissaving.** Using savings for current expenses.

**do, did.** In general, avoid the conversationally emphatic use of this auxiliary verb, as in “Prices did rise 3 percent in October.” Instead, create the emphasis another way: *In fact, prices rose 3 percent in October.*

**doctor of philosophy (Ph.D.)**

**dollars and cents.** An amount less than a dollar can be written as a decimal fraction (*\$0.39*) or as cents (*39 cents*), depending on the context. If all of the amounts in a section of the text are less than a dollar, they should all be written as cents: *The price per bushel was 34 cents in 2007, 28 cents in 2008, and 39 cents in 2009.* If some amounts are dollars, however, the cents can be written as decimal fractions for consistency: *The price per bushel was \$1.00 in 2007, \$0.89 in 2008, and \$0.99 in 2009.*

A lump sum of money, though the dollars are decidedly plural, is treated as singular: *At least \$1.21 billion goes toward housing or if \$800 million is authorized next year.*

Dollar amounts always take a dollar sign (\$) when a specific value is expressed: *a revenue increase of \$3 billion.* Otherwise, the word is written out: *a revenue increase exceeding several million dollars.*

Specific amounts of money always use numerals, even for numbers below 10: *\$4 million, a 6 cent tax.* Indefinite numbers are spelled out: *thousands of dollars.*

**domestic demand.** Total purchases of final goods and services, regardless of their origin, by U.S. consumers, businesses, and governments during a given period. Domestic demand equals gross domestic product minus net exports.

**double-.** double check (n.), double-check (v.), double-count (n. and v.), double-digit (adj.), double-edged (adj.), double-space (v.), double-spaced (adj.), double standard (n.).

**Dow Jones Industrial Average, Dow Jones average**

**down-.** downgrade, download, downplay, downsizing, downturn, but down payment. See **prefixes.**

**-down.** drawdown (n.), draw down (v.), slowdown (n.), slow down (v). See **suffixes.**

**Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).** An agency of the Department of Justice.

**dual-eligible beneficiaries** (not “dual eligibles”). People who are eligible to receive benefits from Medicare and Medicaid at the same time.

**due to.** Means “owed to” (*One dollar is due to each taxpayer*); “arranged or timed to” (*The session is due to end next week*); or “because of.” In the last case, **due to** should be used only as an adjective modifying a noun (*the cancellation, due to rain, of the CBO softball game*). Using **due to** as an adverb modifying a verb, as in “It was canceled due to rain,” is incorrect.

# E

**e-**. e-book, e-commerce, but email. (The **e** stands for *electronic*.)

**E-2, E-3**. Military pay grades (in this case denoting enlisted ranks) are always hyphenated.

**earned income tax credit (EITC)**

**Earth**. Uppercase unless referring to soil, which is *earth*.

**east**. Lowercase when referring to a direction or general location: *an east wind, eastward, eastern Nigeria, eastern United States*. Uppercase when referring to a specific geographic or political region: *the East, Eastern culture, Easterner, East Asia, Eastern Hemisphere, the Far East*. Thus, note the distinctions between *eastern Europe* (the countries on the eastern side of Europe) and *Eastern Europe* (the Cold War political entity) and between *east coast* (the shoreline) and *East Coast* (the region).

**Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 (EGTRRA, Public Law 107-16)**. A law that significantly reduced tax liabilities between 2001 and 2010 by cutting individual income tax rates, increasing the child tax credit, repealing estate taxes, and making many other changes to the tax code. Some of the law's provisions were made permanent, but most were scheduled to expire by December 31, 2010, although they have been modified or extended since then.

**economic stimulus**. Federal fiscal or monetary policies that are aimed at promoting economic activity and used primarily during recessions. Such policies include reductions in taxes, increases in federal spending, cuts in interest rates, and other support for financial markets and institutions.

**economywide**

**effect**. See **affect/effect**.

**effective tax rate**. The ratio of taxes paid to a given tax base. For individual income taxes, the effective tax rate is typically expressed as the ratio of taxes paid to adjusted gross income. For corporate income taxes, it is the ratio of taxes paid to corporations' domestic economic profits. The effective tax rate is a useful measure because the tax code's various exemptions, credits, deductions, and tax rates make actual ratios of taxes paid to income different from statutory tax rates. Compare with **marginal tax rate** and **statutory tax rate**.

**e.g.** See the box about **Foreign Phrases and Abbreviations** on page 27.

**EGTRRA**. See **Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001**.

**either . . . or, neither . . . nor**. The nouns that follow these words require a verb that agrees with the noun closer to it: *Neither John nor his friends were able to finish the race. Either Mary or James is coming over.*

**-elect**. President-elect. See **suffixes**.

**electro-**. electrocardiogram, electromagnet, but electro-optics. See **prefixes**.

**eliminate**. See **obviate/eliminate**.

**ellipsis**. An ellipsis is a punctuation mark that indicates a gap in quoted material. Its placement depends on the location of the material being omitted.

Three dots indicate an omission within a sentence: *"Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech."* Note that spaces separate the dots from each other and from the surrounding text. Punctuation from the original may be used on either side of the ellipsis if it is needed to preserve the sense of the original:

*“We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, . . . do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”*

When what follows the ellipsis comes from a different sentence or paragraph, the ending punctuation (period, question mark, or exclamation point) of the previous sentence being quoted is placed before the ellipsis: *“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion. . . . The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated.”*

In general writing (as opposed to legal or scholarly writing), do not use an ellipsis at the beginning or end of a quoted passage unless there is a compelling reason to indicate that something is missing there.

In all cases, make sure that the dots of an ellipsis remain on the same line.

**email** (n. and v.). Stands for *electronic mail*.

**em dash.** See dashes.

**emergency unemployment benefits, Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) program**

**employee’s or employer’s share of payroll taxes**

**employee stock ownership plan (ESOP)**

**employment-based health insurance.** This term is more accurate than “employer-provided” or “employer-sponsored” health insurance because insurance is sometimes arranged by entities such as labor unions, in which case it is based on employment but not provided by an employer. (The employer, however, may pay some or all of the cost.)

**employment cost index (ECI).** An index produced by the Bureau of Labor Statistics that

measures the weighted-average cost of an hour of labor, which comprises the cost to an employer of wage and salary payments, employee benefits, and payroll taxes for social insurance programs, such as Social Security.

**enact.** See **adopt/agree to/approve/enact/pass/ratify**.

**en dash.** See dashes.

**end strength**

**energy efficient.** Not hyphenated after a noun: *an appliance that is energy efficient*. Hyphenated before a noun: *an energy-efficient mode of transport*. The same rule applies to *energy efficiency*.

**England.** See **United Kingdom**.

**ensure.** See **assure/ensure/insure**.

**entitled.** Means “having the right to do or have something.” Do not use it to mean “titled,” as in “a book entitled *Vanity Fair*.”

**entitlement.** A legal obligation of the federal government to make payments to a person, group of people, business, unit of government, or similar entity that meets the eligibility criteria set in law and for which the budget authority is not provided in advance in an appropriation act. Spending for entitlement programs is controlled through the programs’ eligibility criteria and benefit or payment rules. The best-known entitlements are the government’s major benefit programs, such as Social Security and Medicare.

**Environmental Protection Agency.** The preferred form of the agency’s abbreviation is EPA, not “the EPA.”

**establishment survey.** An informal name for the Department of Labor’s Current Employment Statistics Survey of employers, which measures employment as the estimated number of non-farm wage and salary jobs. Also referred to as the *payroll survey*. Compare with **household survey**.

**estate and gift taxes.** A linked set of federal taxes on estates, gifts, and generation-skipping transfers designed to tax the transfer of wealth from one generation to the next and to limit the extent to which wealth can be given away during life to avoid taxation at death.

**estimates.** Remember that **estimates** is both a noun and a verb and can easily be read the wrong way. In the phrase “CBO estimates,” if “estimates” is being used as a verb, insert “that” after it to remove any doubt about which form is meant (*CBO estimates that the three options would have similar effects*); if “estimates” is a noun, use the possessive (*CBO’s estimates of the three options*).

**et al.** See the box about **Foreign Phrases and Abbreviations** on page 27.

**et cetera, etc.** See the box about **Foreign Phrases and Abbreviations** on page 27.

**European Union (EU).** Use the full name as a noun (*changes in the European Union*); use the abbreviation as an adjective (*seven EU members*). The official currency of most member countries of the European Union is the *euro*.

**euro zone.** The area comprising the member states of the European Union that have adopted the euro as the single currency and that are subject to a single monetary policy conducted under the responsibility of the European Central Bank. Also known as the *euro area*. (Several other countries use the euro but are not members of the European Union. In addition, some EU members are not part of the euro zone.)

**everybody, everyone.** These nouns take singular verbs and, in general, singular pronouns: *Everyone who enrolls in the auto club receives a decal for his or her car window*. Exceptions may be made when “his or her” proves too awkward: *If everybody shows up at 3:00, they will not be able to find parking*. In such cases, however, rewriting the entire sentence in the plural is preferable: *If all of the guests show up at 3:00,*

*they will not be able to find parking*. The same rules apply to *anybody* and *anyone*. See the box about **Pronouns** on page 57.

**ex-** ex-official, ex-President, but *ex officio*. See **prefixes**.

**ex ante.** See the box about **Foreign Phrases and Abbreviations** on page 27.

**exchange rate.** The number of units of a currency that can be bought with one unit of another currency—for example, the number of euros that can be purchased with one dollar. Never hyphenated: *exchange rate system*.

**excise tax.** A tax levied on the purchase of a specific type of good or service, such as tobacco products or air transportation services.

**executive branch.** Always lowercase.

**executive order.** Issued by the President or by a state or local official, executive orders are lowercase unless referred to by number: *an executive order about classified national security information, Executive Order 12958*.

**expansion.** A phase of the business cycle that begins when gross domestic product exceeds its previous peak and extends until gross domestic product reaches its next peak.

**expenditure account.** An account established within federal funds and trust funds to record appropriations, obligations, and outlays (as well as offsetting collections) that are usually financed from an associated receipt account.

**expenditures.** A better choice is *spending*, which is shorter, easier to read, and usually means the same thing. See the box about **Plain English** on page 53. Also see **spending/funding**.

**Export-Import Bank (Ex-Im Bank), the bank**

**ex post facto.** See the box about **Foreign Phrases and Abbreviations** on page 27.

**extra-** extracurricular, extrajudicial, extraordinary. See **prefixes**.

# F

**F-14 fighter, F-15, F-16, F-22**

**F/A-18 aircraft, F/A-18E/F**

**fairly, quite, rather, somewhat.** These modifiers are vague and detract from the clear prose CBO aims for. Use them sparingly or, better yet, not at all.

**fair market rent (FMR)**

**fall.** The season is lowercase even when used with a year: *fall 2011*.

**family day care home**

**family support program**

**Fannie Mae.** The name commonly used by the organization known formally as the Federal National Mortgage Association. (**Fannie Mae** is derived from the abbreviation FNMA.) Fannie Mae is a government-sponsored enterprise that was founded during the Great Depression and federally chartered in 1968 as a shareholder-owned corporation to provide a stable source of funding for residential mortgages. Since September 2008, Fannie Mae has been in federal conservatorship.

Because Fannie Mae's common name is much better known than its formal one and is how the organization refers to itself, the formal name need not be mentioned in CBO documents.

**farm price support, farm price support program**

**farther/further.** To prevent confusion, keep in mind that **farther** conveys distance and **further** indicates degree: *Further effort was beyond him; he could go no farther.*

**federal.** Lowercase (*federal aid, federal government*) unless part of a proper name (*Federal Reserve Board, Federal Highway Administration*).

**Federal-Aid Highway program, Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, federal-aid highways**

**Federal Credit Reform Act of 1990 (FCRA)**

**Federal Direct Loan Program.** See William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program.

**Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**

**Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) program.** Note that **Employees** has an apostrophe.

**Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) program.** Note that **Employees** does not have an apostrophe.

**Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS).** Note that **Employees** does not have an apostrophe.

**Federal Financing Bank (FFB)**

**Federal Flexible Spending Account Program (FSAFEDS)**

**federal funds.** In the federal accounting structure, all accounts through which collections of money and expenditures are recorded, except those classified by law as **trust funds**. Federal funds include several types of funds, one of which is the **general fund**.

**federal funds rate.** The interest rate that financial institutions charge each other for overnight loans of their monetary reserves. The Federal Reserve uses the federal funds rate to conduct monetary policy. A rise in that rate (compared with other short-term interest rates) suggests a tightening of monetary policy, whereas a fall suggests an easing.

**Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)**

**Federal Home Loan Bank Board, the Bank Board****Federal Home Loan Banks (FHLBanks), Federal Home Loan Bank System, the FHLBank system****Federal Housing Administration (FHA)**

**Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA).** An agency created in 2008 by merging the Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight, the Federal Housing Finance Board, and a team in the Department of Housing and Urban Development that dealt with government-sponsored enterprises. FHFA regulates Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and the Federal Home Loan Banks.

**Federal Open Market Committee.** The group within the Federal Reserve System that determines the stance of monetary policy.

**Federal Pell Grant Program** (thereafter, informally, *the Pell grant program*), **Pell grant**

**Federal Perkins Loan Program** (thereafter, informally, *the Perkins loan program*), **Perkins loan**

**federal poverty guidelines/federal poverty thresholds.** The federal government produces two measures of the line between poverty and nonpoverty. The poverty guidelines issued by the Department of Health and Human Services are used to determine eligibility for various programs. They differ slightly from the poverty thresholds issued by the Census Bureau, which are used mainly for statistical purposes (such as determining the number of people living in poverty). Both measures vary for families of different sizes, which is why **guidelines** and **thresholds** are plural. It is important to use the correct term for precision: *Tax filers who have income between 100 percent and 400 percent of the federal poverty guidelines are eligible for the tax credit. In 2007, some 37 million people lived*

*in families with income below the federal poverty thresholds.*

The poverty thresholds are sometimes referred to as the “poverty line,” and the guidelines as the “poverty level.” Those terms are imprecise, however, and should be used only if they are defined first: *The rules apply to households with income below 450 percent of the federal poverty guidelines (commonly known as the federal poverty level, or FPL).*

**Federal Reserve System, the system, the Federal Reserve** (not “the Fed”). As the central bank of the United States, the Federal Reserve System is responsible for setting the nation’s monetary policy and overseeing credit conditions.

**federal-state program**

**fee-for-service plan**

**fewer/less.** Fewer refers to individually distinguishable, countable units and is usually used with plural nouns and pronouns: *fewer hours, fewer cost effects, 20 or fewer states.* In contrast, less refers to quantity—that is, to an amount that cannot be counted incrementally—and is ordinarily used with a singular noun or pronoun: *less time, less money, less of it.*

**figure.** Uppercase when referring to a specific figure in a document: *see Figure 2-5.* Lowercase when referring to figures nonspecifically or when there is only one: *The figures in this report are based on updated estimates* or *See the figure below* (usually used in a text box).

**Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery, and Enforcement Act of 1989 (FIRREA)**

**financial intermediary.** An institution that indirectly matches borrowers with lenders. For example, depository institutions, such as commercial banks or savings and loan institutions, lend funds that they have accepted from depositors. Life insurance companies or pension

funds lend or invest funds that they hold in reserve against future claims by policyholders or participating retirees.

### financial services market

**financing account.** A nonbudgetary account required for a federal credit program that reconciles subsidies calculated on an accrual basis with the cash flows associated with credit activities. The account tracks flows between the Treasury, the program account, and the public. The net cash flow in each financing account for a fiscal year is shown in the federal budget as an *other means of financing*.

### first-come, first-served basis

**first-person pronouns.** See the box about **Pronouns** on page 57.

**first, second, and so on.** Use instead of “firstly,” “secondly,” and so on as introductory words.

**fiscal policy.** The government’s tax and spending policies, which influence the amount and maturity of government debt as well as the level, composition, and distribution of national output and income.

**fiscal stimulus.** A type of economic stimulus consisting of changes in tax rates or government spending intended to encourage economic activity. Fiscal stimulus typically takes the form of temporary or permanent cuts in tax rates, or debt-financed increases in the government’s transfer payments or purchases of goods and services. Compare with **monetary stimulus**.

**fiscal year.** An annual accounting period. The federal government’s fiscal year begins on October 1 and ends on September 30. A fiscal year is designated by the calendar year in which it ends—for example, fiscal year 2013 began on October 1, 2012, and ended on September 30, 2013.

Lowercase **fiscal year** when not part of a formal title: *outlays for fiscal year 2014*. **Fiscal year** is

always spelled out, never abbreviated as “fiscal 2014” or “FY 2014.” It is never hyphenated.

### fixed rate mortgage

**fixed-weighted price index.** An index that measures the overall price level (compared with a base period) without being influenced by changes in the composition of output or purchases.

### flexible spending account

**flight test** (n.), **flight-test** (v. and adj.), **flight-tested** (v. and adj.)

**focus, foci** (pl.)

**focus, focused, focusing**

**-fold.** Hyphenate compounds formed with the suffix **-fold** if they contain a numeral over 10: *23-fold, 106-fold*. Otherwise, do not hyphenate them: *eightfold, tenfold, hundredfold, manyfold, millionfold*. See **suffixes**.

**follow-on** (n. and adj.)

**follow-up** (n. and adj.), **follow up** (v.)

**Food Stamp program.** Now called the **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**.

**footnotes.** See the section about **Footnotes and References** that begins on page 77.

**fore-.** forefather, forefront, forestall, forewarn. See **prefixes** and **forgo/forego**.

**forecast.** Present and past tense (not “forecasted”): *Last year, CBO forecast that the deficit would increase.*

**foreign direct investment.** Financial investment by which a person or entity acquires an active ownership share of a foreign business. As measured by the Bureau of Economic Analysis, foreign direct investment consists only of investments that result in an ownership share greater than 10 percent of the value of a business.

foreign exchange value

Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program, the  
FMS trust fund, foreign military sales

foreign-source income

**forgo/forego.** **Forgo** is a verb that means “to let pass or abstain from”: *The committee decided to forgo debate.* **Forego** is a verb that means “to go before” and is rarely used in that form.

**Forgoing** and **forgone** are the present and past participles, respectively, of **forgo**: *The Congress is forgoing [has forgone] any new tax increases this year.* **Foregoing** is an adjective meaning “earlier” or “preceding”: *Of the foregoing list, six items deserve note.* **Foregone** is an adjective that means “predetermined”: *It was a foregone conclusion.*

formula, formulas (pl.)

forum, forums (pl.)

forward-deployed units

**forward funding.** The provision of budget authority that becomes available for obligation in the last quarter of a fiscal year and remains available during the following fiscal year.

**fractions.** CBO’s documents sometimes use fractions (*26½ percent*) to indicate that percentages have been rounded to a larger increment than the nearest 0.1 percent, such as the nearest one-quarter or one-half percent. When employing fractions for that purpose, include a footnote after the first fraction saying “This report uses fractions to indicate numbers rounded to the nearest quarter percent” (or whatever is applicable). For consistency within a document, do not mix fractions and numbers with decimal points, if possible.

Hyphenate spelled-out fractions: *one-half, one-third, nine-tenths.*

### Foreign Phrases and Abbreviations

Some readers are unlikely to be familiar with Latinate phrases or abbreviations (for instance, many people confuse “e.g.” and “i.e.”). Thus, avoid the following phrases in favor of English where possible:

For	Use
ceteris paribus	all else being equal
de minimis	insignificant, minor
de novo	over again, anew
e.g.	for example, for instance
et al.	and others
et cetera, etc.	and so forth, and the like
ex ante	beforehand, in advance, expected
ex post facto	after the fact, retroactive
i.e.	that is
inter alia	among others
per annum	a year, per year, annually
per se	in itself
vis-à-vis	opposite, as compared with

Some foreign phrases, however, have no adequate English equivalents: *ad hoc*, *ad valorem*, *a priori*, *de facto*, *sine qua non*, and *versus*, for example. Use them if necessary, but sparingly, and never italicize them. Also see **ibid.**

**Freddie Mac.** The name commonly used by the organization known formally as the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation. Freddie Mac is a government-sponsored enterprise that was founded and federally chartered in 1970 as a shareholder-owned corporation to provide a stable source of funding for residential mortgages. Since September 2008, Freddie Mac has been in federal conservatorship.

Because Freddie Mac’s common name is much better known than its formal one and is how the organization refers to itself, the formal name need not be mentioned in CBO documents.

**-free.** debt-free, interest-free, tax-free. See **suffixes**.

**free-market system**

**free-trade area**

**frequently.** See **often**.

**fuel efficient.** Not hyphenated after a noun (*a car that is fuel efficient*). Hyphenated before a noun (*a fuel-efficient vehicle*). The same rule applies to *fuel efficiency*.

**full time.** Not hyphenated after a noun (*The job could be full time*) or after a verb (*She works full time*). Hyphenated before a noun (*a full-time position*).

**full-time equivalents (FTEs), full-time-equivalent positions**

**funding.** See **spending/funding**.

**Future Years Defense Program (FYDP)**

**further/farther.** To prevent confusion, keep in mind that **further** indicates degree and **farther** conveys distance: *Further effort was beyond him; he could go no farther*.

**G7, G8.** See **Group of Seven (G7) industrialized countries** or **Group of Eight (G8) industrialized countries**.

**GDI.** See **gross domestic income**.

**GDP.** See **gross domestic product**.

**GDP gap.** The difference between actual and potential gross domestic product, expressed as a percentage of potential GDP.

**GDP price index.** A summary measure of the prices of all goods and services that make up gross domestic product. The change in the GDP price index is used as a measure of inflation in the overall economy.

**gender/sex.** **Gender** refers to grammatical (and sometimes sociocultural) categories; **sex** refers to biological categories. For example, *male* and *female* are categories of sex, whereas *masculine* and *feminine* are categories of gender. When reporting on the type of data frequently used at CBO, **sex** is usually the correct term, as in *The respondents were classified by age, sex, and family income*.

**general-equilibrium growth model**

**general fund.** One category of federal funds in the government's accounting structure. The general fund records all revenues and offsetting receipts not earmarked by law for a specific purpose and all spending financed by those revenues and receipts.

**General Schedule (GS) workers**

**GI Bill.** This term refers to a collection of programs administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs that provide education benefits to former service members. The term **GI Bill** should be used only in that general sense. When talking specifically about the Montgomery GI

Bill (MGIB) program or the Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33) program, use those names instead.

**gigahertz (GHz)**

**Ginnie Mae.** The name commonly used by the organization known formally as the Government National Mortgage Association. (**Ginnie Mae** is derived from the abbreviation GNMA.) Ginnie Mae is a government-owned corporation within the Department of Housing and Urban Development. It guarantees the timely payment of principal and interest on securities that are backed by single-family and multi-family residential mortgages insured by government agencies, such as the Federal Housing Administration and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

On first mention in a CBO document, introduce the organization as the *Government National Mortgage Association (Ginnie Mae)* or the *Government National Mortgage Association (GNMA)*, depending on the short name preferred; then use that short name in later references.

**GNP.** See **gross national product**.

**goods.** Tangible commodities, such as cars or clothing, as opposed to such intangible commodities as education or health care, which are services.

**government.** Lowercase when referring informally to the governing body of a nation or state: *the U.S. government, the government of France*.

**Government Accountability Office (GAO).** Formerly the General Accounting Office.

**government-sponsored enterprise (GSE).** A financial institution created by federal law, generally through a federal charter, to carry out activities such as increasing the availability of

credit to borrowers or enhancing liquidity in certain sectors of the economy, notably agriculture and housing. (Two of the housing GSEs, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, were put into federal conservatorship in September 2008.)

### governmentwide

**governor.** See **titles of office.**

**grant.** A transfer payment from the federal government to a state or local government or other recipient to help fund projects or activities that do not involve substantial federal participation.

**grants-in-aid.** Grants from the federal government to state and local governments to help provide for programs of assistance or service to the public.

**Great Britain.** See **United Kingdom.**

### Great Depression

### Great Society

**greenhouse gas.** Never hyphenated: *greenhouse gas emissions.*

**gross domestic income (GDI).** The sum of all income earned in the domestic production of goods and services. In theory, GDI should equal gross domestic product, but measurement difficulties leave a statistical discrepancy between the two.

**gross domestic product (GDP).** The total market value of goods and services produced domestically during a given period. That value of the nation's output is conceptually equal to gross domestic income, but measurement difficulties result in a statistical discrepancy between the two. The components of GDP are consumption (household and government), gross investment (private and government), and net exports.

**gross investment.** A measure of additions to the capital stock that does not subtract depreciation of existing capital.

**gross national product (GNP).** The total market value of goods and services produced in a given period by labor and capital supplied by residents of a country, regardless of where the labor and capital are located. That value is conceptually equal to the total income accruing to residents of the country during that period (*national income*). GNP differs from gross domestic product primarily by including the capital income that residents earn from investments abroad and excluding the capital income that nonresidents earn from domestic investment.

### groundwater

**group-model health maintenance organization, group- and staff-model HMOs**

**Group of Eight (G8) industrialized countries.** The G7 members plus Russia.

**Group of Seven (G7) industrialized countries.** The current members are Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

**guarantee.** Use instead of “guaranty,” except in proper names (*Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation*) or when referring to certain programs that use that term (*VA's home loan guaranty program*).

**Guard.** See **National Guard.**

**Gulf Coast** (the region), **Gulf coast** (the shoreline)

**hard-line** (adj.), **hard-liners**

**hardrock mining**

**hard-target warhead**

**hazardous waste.** Never hyphenated: *hazardous waste site*.

**H. Con. Res.** Stands for *House concurrent resolution*. Not spelled out when used with a number: *H. Con. Res. 8*.

**he or she.** See the box about **Pronouns** on page 57.

**Head Start**

**health care.** Always two words and never hyphenated: *health care services*.

**Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-152).** One of two laws enacted in March 2010 that made major changes to the U.S. health care and health insurance systems. (The other was the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, P.L. 111-148.) See **Affordable Care Act**.

**Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)**

**health maintenance organization (HMO)**

**hemisphere.** Lowercase except when referring to a particular part of the world: *the Northern Hemisphere*.

**high income.** Not hyphenated after a noun: *a family with high income*. Hyphenated before a noun: *a high-income family*. The same treatment applies to other phrases containing *high*, *higher*, or *highest*. Exception: *people in the highest income category*, in which “highest” is modifying “income category” rather than just “income.”

**Highway Trust Fund**

**his or her.** See the box about **Pronouns** on page 57.

**Hispanic, Hispanic American.** Never hyphenated.

**historic/historical.** **Historic** means “contributing to or making history” and suggests momentousness, as in *a historic expedition*. **Historical** means “pertaining to the past,” as in *a historical account*. (Note that “a,” not “an,” is the correct article to use with either word.) In most cases, the simpler *past* will suffice for *historical*, as in *Past reports indicate that such measures can be effective*. Avoid the phrases “past history,” “past experience,” or “historical experience”; they are redundant.

**HIV.** Stands for *human immunodeficiency virus*. HIV is well enough known by its acronym that it does not need to be spelled out.

**H.J. Res.** Stands for *House joint resolution*. Not spelled out when used with a number: *H.J. Res. 132*.

**Hobson’s choice.** As the story goes, Thomas Hobson was a 17th-century liveryman who required every customer to take the horse nearest the door or leave empty-handed. The choice, then, is really no choice at all. It is an ultimatum, not a dilemma.

**-holder.** bondholder, claim holder, debt holder, equity holder, leaseholder, officeholder, policyholder, shareholder, stockholder. See **suffixes**.

**home-.** home-based care, homebound, home builders, home-building industry, homebuyer, home-equity loan, homeland, home mortgage lending, homeowner, home ownership, home page, home port (n.), homeport (v.), homeschool (v.). See **prefixes**.

**Honorable.** See **Congressional correspondence.**

**Hospital Insurance (HI) Trust Fund, the HI trust fund.** The fund used for Part A of Medicare.

**House.** Uppercase in references to the House of Representatives and in informal references such as *Both Houses of Congress have considered the measure.*

**household survey.** Informal name for the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey, which, among other things, measures employment as the estimated number of people employed (rather than as the estimated number of jobs). Compare with **establishment survey.**

**however.** When it means "contrary to expectation," **however** should be placed in a sentence so that it emphasizes the contrast with what precedes it: *Domestic use is up because of new policies; exports, however, are down.* **However** should not appear so far along in a sentence that it loses its impact. As an alternative, use *but* judiciously for sharp emphasis, or start the

sentence with *in contrast* or *by contrast*. *Though* can also be used instead of **however** to avoid repetition.

**H.R. 3102.** The H.R. stands for *House of Representatives*, and 3102 is the number of the bill. Not spelled out.

**H. Res.** Stands for *House resolution*. Not spelled out when used with a number: *H. Res. 14.*

**human immunodeficiency virus.** See **HIV.**

**hundredweight (cwt)**

**hydro-** hydrocarbon, hydroelectric, hydromagnetic, hydronuclear, hydropower. See **prefixes.**

**hyper-** hyperinflation, hyperresponsive, hypertension. See **prefixes.**

**hyphenation and compound words.** See the box on page 33.

**hypothesis, hypotheses (pl.)**

## Hyphenation and Compound Words

“If you take the hyphen seriously, you will surely go mad,” wrote the author of the stylebook of the Oxford University Press. Many rules and exceptions exist for this pesky piece of punctuation, but they all serve a single purpose: to prevent confusion by showing which words and ideas go together (for example, to show that in referring to 20-odd Senators, the writer does not mean 20 strange Senators). The dictionary (*Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, [www.m-w.com](http://www.m-w.com)) can answer many hyphenation questions, as can *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Some general rules follow:

- In most cases, hyphenate two or more words when they are combined to form a single idea that is used as a compound adjective before the noun it modifies: *across-the-board increase*, *cost-of-living adjustment*, *full-time employee*, *private-sector initiative*. That rule applies particularly to compounds in which one element is a present or past participle: *cost-sharing provisions*, *inflation-adjusted estimate*. (However, compounds that have become so familiar that they are unlikely to be misread are not hyphenated: *day care center*, *health care costs*, *income tax receipts*. Such exceptions are listed separately and alphabetically in this guide.)
- Do not hyphenate words used to form a single idea when they follow the noun they modify or are not used as adjectives: *an increase across the board*, *an adjustment in the cost of living*, *an employee working full time*, *an initiative taken by the private sector*, *provisions for cost sharing*. (Exceptions, such as *cost-effective* or *tax-exempt*, are listed separately and alphabetically in this guide.)
- Do not hyphenate adverbs ending in *-ly* combined with adjectives or participles, even if they immediately precede the noun they modify: *clearly preferable option*, *widely discussed alternatives*.
- Hyphenate number-and-noun compounds that form modifiers (unless they involve money or percentages or include abbreviated units of measure): *five-year projection*, *three-phase program*, *11-year lag*, *150-mile pipeline*, *230-page report*. Also hyphenate fractions written out: *one-third*, *two-fifths*. Note the correct usage when money, percentages, or abbreviations are involved: *\$3 million increase*, *90 cent tax*, *11 percent decline*, *0.2 percentage-point increase* (but better to write *an increase of 0.2 percentage points*), *16 kWh battery*.
- Do not hyphenate most compound adjectives used as verbs, even though the same words may merge when they form an adjective or noun: *phase out the program*, *the phaseout period*; *pass through the costs*, *the pass-through costs*; *the plan to build up forces*, *the force buildup*. An exception is *short circuit*, which is not hyphenated as a noun but is hyphenated as a verb: *a short circuit*, *to short-circuit a system*.
- In a series, the hyphens stand: *low- and middle-income families*; *low- and lower-middle- as well as upper-middle-income families* (but after the noun: *a family with low income*). Similarly, *pre- and postwar Iraq*.
- Hyphenate prefixes or suffixes only when specified by *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* ([www.m-w.com](http://www.m-w.com)) or by the entries for particular prefixes and suffixes in this guide or when necessary to prevent confusion or peculiar multiplication of letters: *re-signed* (signed again), *resigned* (quit), *un-ionized*, *anti-inflation*, *bell-like*, *semi-independent*.

I. See the box about **Pronouns** on page 57.

**ibid.** Use **ibid.** in footnotes to indicate that a work is identical to the one cited in the preceding footnote. **Ibid.** is an abbreviation of the Latin word *ibidem* (“in the same place”) and thus is followed by a period; it is not italicized.

i.e. See the box about **Foreign Phrases and Abbreviations** on page 27.

**if/whether.** **If** introduces a conditional idea; **whether** introduces an alternative or possibility (sometimes in the form of an indirect question). *If it rains, the roads may flood, so I want to find out whether a storm is coming.* The distinction between **if** and **whether** is important because the two words can mean different things when used in the same place. For instance, *the group needs to know if she can help with the project* means that the group needs to know only if the answer is yes; *the group needs to know whether she can help with the project* means that the group needs to know either way. Also see **whether or not**.

**Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).** An agency in the Department of Homeland Security that replaced elements of the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the Customs Service.

**impact.** Do not use as a verb. A reduction in tax revenues does not impact a town—it affects it, influences it, or has an impact on it. The noun **impact** means a “sudden strike or sharp blow” or “a significant or major effect”; unless one of those senses is meant, another noun is usually preferable, such as *effect*, *influence*, or *result*. Also see **affect/effect**.

**Impact Aid**

**in-** inbound, indoor, inelastic, inorganic, inpatient, insider, invaluable, but in-depth, in-house, in-law, in situ. See **prefixes**.

**include.** Use to introduce items that do not constitute a complete list. For example, the statement *labor income includes cash wages and salaries* implies that those two things are not the only components of labor income. If they are, write *labor income consists of cash wages and salaries* or *labor income comprises cash wages and salaries*. Also see **comprise/compose/constitute**.

**income.** This word should generally be singular. See the box about **Possessives** on page 54.

**income replacement, income security, income support.** Never hyphenated: *income replacement benefits, income support programs*.

**income tax.** Never hyphenated: *income tax brackets*.

**independent practice association (IPA)**

**index, indexes** (pl.)

**Indian.** Use only as part of a proper noun, such as the *Indian Health Service*. Otherwise use *Native American*.

**individual/person.** Although these words are synonymous, **person** is preferred in singular uses: *Each person who enrolls in the class will receive a textbook.* **Individual** is appropriate when contrasting a person with a group or organization: *Individuals may have to forgo some rights for the sake of the organization.* (In the plural, use *people* rather than “persons.”)

**individual income tax rate**

**individual retirement account (IRA)**

**infinitive.** See **split infinitive**.

**inflation.** Growth in a general measure of prices (such as the consumer price index), usually expressed as an annual rate of change. Because **inflation** denotes a general increase in prices, avoid using it to refer to a specific item; for example, instead of “gasoline price inflation,” say *gasoline price increases*.

**infra-** infrared, infrastructure. See **prefixes**.

**infrastructure.** Government-owned capital goods that provide services to the public, usually with benefits to the community at large as well as to the direct user. Examples include schools, roads, bridges, dams, harbors, public buildings, and water treatment systems.

**Inland Waterways Trust Fund, the inland waterway system**

**in-network pharmacy**

**insure.** See **assure/ensure/insure**.

**inter-** interaction, intercontinental, international, interrelated, interstate, but inter-American. See **prefixes**.

**inter alia.** See the box about **Foreign Phrases and Abbreviations** on page 27.

**intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM)**

**interest rate.** Never hyphenated: *interest rate subsidy*.

**interest rate spread.** The difference between two interest rates.

**Internal Revenue Code (IRC), the tax code**

**Internal Revenue Service (IRS)**

**International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD).** One of two entities that make up the World Bank. (The other is the International Development Association.) Refer to the World Bank unless there is a reason to refer to only one of the entities.

**International Monetary Fund (IMF), the fund**

**Internet.** Always capitalized.

**Interstate System.** Familiar name for the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways. **Interstate** is uppercase when referring to roads that are officially part of the system (*Interstate highways*); it is lowercase when referring to other roads that cross state lines (*interstate highways*).

**intra-** intrabudgetary, intracoastal, intramural, intranet, intraregional, intrastate. Hyphenate **intra-** before a vowel unless the dictionary specifies otherwise: intra-agency, intra-industry, but intraocular. See **prefixes**.

**in turn.** See **therefore**.

**inventories.** Stocks of goods held by businesses for further processing or for sale.

**investment.** *Physical investment* is the current product set aside during a given period to be used for future production; it represents an addition to the capital stock. As measured by the national income and product accounts, *private domestic investment* consists of investment in residential and nonresidential structures, producers’ durable equipment and software, and the change in business inventories. *Financial investment* is the purchase of a financial security, such as a stock, bond, or mortgage. *Investment in human capital* is spending on education, training, health services, and other activities that increase the productivity of the workforce. (Investment in human capital is not treated as investment by the national income and product accounts.)

**it is, there is, there are.** Avoid overuse of these constructions to begin sentences; they can sound dull and postpone the reader’s arrival at the topic. In addition, a solitary “it” can raise questions of reference. The constructions are easy to avoid, however. For example, instead of

writing “There are several ways to approach the problem,” write *Several ways exist to approach the problem*. And instead of writing “There is little reason to assume that the savings from adopting the plan would be significant,” write *No significant savings would be likely to result from the plan*.

**it's/its.** **It's** is the contraction of “it is” or “it has.”

**Its** is the possessive form of the neuter pronoun. *I always know when it's time for the shop to have its annual sale*. Do not use **it's** or other contractions in CBO writing unless they are part of a direct quotation or in the title of a work being cited.

**jargon.** The dictionary defines jargon as “the technical terminology or characteristic idiom of a special activity or group.” At CBO, some jargon enjoys a special status. Many concepts related to economics or government programs cannot be discussed with precision if the writer does not use some jargon. The term *means-tested*, for example, not only has its own meaning but also creates a distinction with *income-tested*. Similarly, common speech offers no simple alternatives to *cross-subsidy*, *marginal tax bracket*, *constant dollars*, or many other examples.

A simple-sounding rule applies: Never use jargon unless it is essential for precision. In other words, avoid it whenever common, universally understood words or phrases will serve. Even jargon that is deemed essential must be defined at its first mention.

**Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003 (JGTRRA, Public Law 108-27).** A law that reduced taxes by advancing the effective date of several tax cuts previously enacted in the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 and by making other temporary changes to the tax code.

job-search assistance

Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA),  
job-training program

joint-and-several liability

**Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS).** Not to be confused with the Joint Staff, which is the staff of the Chairman of the JCS.

**Joint Committee on Taxation (JCT).** On the first reference in the text of a CBO document to an estimate by this committee, specify *the staff of the Joint Committee on Taxation*, which does the actual estimating, as in *CBO and the staff of the Joint Committee on Taxation (JCT) estimate that changing those provisions would have little net effect on revenues*. On further references in the text, use the abbreviation JCT to refer to the committee staff (rather than writing “the staff of JCT”). In source lines for figures and tables, which typically do not include abbreviations, specify *the staff of the Joint Committee on Taxation*.

judgment (not “judgement”)

judicial branch. Always lowercase.

kilogram (kg)

kilohertz (kHz)

kilometer (km), square kilometer (km<sup>2</sup>)

kiloton (kt)

kilowatt-hour (kWh)



**labor force.** Never hyphenated: *labor force projections*. Although *Webster's* defines **labor force** as synonymous with *workforce* as general terms, **labor force** also has a distinct meaning: It refers to the number of people age 16 or older in the civilian noninstitutionalized population who have jobs or who are available for work and are actively seeking jobs. (The civilian noninstitutionalized population excludes members of the armed forces on active duty and people in penal or mental institutions or in homes for the elderly or infirm.) The *labor force participation rate* is the labor force as a percentage of the civilian noninstitutionalized population age 16 or older.

**labor income.** Income that is derived from employment, such as wages and salaries. Compare with **capital income**.

**labor-intensive.** Always hyphenated.

**labor productivity.** See **productivity**.

**laid-off worker**

**last/latest/past.** **Last** and **latest** are usually interchangeable, but **last** can mean “final” and **latest** can mean “most recent.” Do not use **last** when **past** is meant: *during the past month* (the previous 31 days), not “during the last month”; but *during the last month of 2012* (that is, December 2012).

**Latina, Latino**

**law.** See **act/bill/law/measure/resolution** and **Public Law**.

**lawmaker, lawmaking**

**layoff** (n.), **lay off** (v.)

**Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) Trust Fund, the LUST trust fund**

**legal citations.** See **Public Law** and the part of the **Footnotes and References** section that begins on page 90.

**legislation.** See **act/bill/law/measure/resolution**.

**legislative branch.** Always lowercase.

**lend/loan.** In general usage, **lend** is a verb and **loan** is a noun: *My parents are lending a hand until I can get a loan. Will you lend me a pencil?* In references to money, however, **loan** is widely accepted as a verb: *The bank loaned me \$10,000.*

**less.** See **fewer/less**.

**less developed country.** Use *developing country* instead.

**less than/under, more than/over.** Traditionally, **less than** and **more than** have been used for countable units: *More than 40 governors attended the conference.* **Under** and **over** have been used for cumulative quantities: *She completed the course in under a year.* Those distinctions are blurring, however, and the term that sounds the best and is the most logical in a given case is the one to use. That approach applies particularly to money, which is treated sometimes as countable units and sometimes as cumulative quantities.

**letters.** See **Congressional correspondence**.

**life-** lifeblood, life cycle (n.), life-cycle (adj.), life insurance, lifelike, lifelong, lifesaving, life-size, life span, lifestyle, lifetime, lifework. See **prefixes**.

**like-** likable, like-minded, likewise. See **prefixes**.

**-like.** bondlike, businesslike, lifelike. See **suffixes**.

**like/as.** Use **like** as a preposition to compare nouns and pronouns: *This year's budget looks like last year's.* Use **as** as a conjunction to link two

clauses: *The House leadership called a meeting as the President requested.* Also see **because/since/as**.

**likely.** When used as an adverb, **likely** should be preceded by *very*, *quite*, or *most*: *The Congress will most likely pass this bill.* Without such a modifier, **likely** is used incorrectly, as in “The bill will likely be passed.” (In that case, use *probably* instead.) As an adjective, **likely** needs no modifier: *The bill is likely to pass. It was a likely story.*

**limit/limitation.** These two words are similar in meaning, but **limit** connotes a boundary or ceiling, whereas **limitation** connotes a liability, drawback, or defect. *Her boss’s limitations drove her to the limit of her patience.* (An exception to that distinction is *obligation limitation*, which is a specific budgetary term. See **obligation**.)

#### line-item veto

**liquidating account.** A budgetary account associated with a federal credit program that records all cash flows resulting from direct loan obligations and loan guarantee commitments made under the program before October 1, 1991.

**liquidity.** With respect to an asset, liquidity is the quality of being readily convertible into cash—that is, the ease with which an asset can be bought and sold in large quantities without affecting its price. Treasury securities are among the most liquid of assets. With respect to an institution, liquidity is the ability to meet financial obligations by virtue of possessing assets that can be readily converted into cash.

**lists.** Displayed lists are good for emphasizing important information or for helping readers through a long series of items. Use them sparingly, however, to avoid blunting their impact.

No item in a displayed list should be longer than about one-third of a page. A series of longer items should be turned into paragraphs with their own headings.

Bullets are the preferred format for displaying items in a list. Bulleted items should be parallel in structure—all phrases or all sentences—and should flow naturally from the introductory statement. If possible, the introduction should be a complete sentence, followed by a colon or a period. If it is a sentence fragment, follow it with a colon.

Capitalize the first word of each bulleted item. Use the same punctuation to end each item except the last one, which always ends with a period. If the items are complete sentences, end each with a period. Otherwise, use commas or semicolons (if one or more of the items have internal commas). When bulleted items are sentence fragments, “and” follows the second-to-last one so that, together with the introduction, they form a complete sentence.

*The plan designates the following types of projects as “technically difficult”:*

- *Monitoring very large land areas or highly radioactive waste in tanks,*
- *Cleaning up contaminated groundwater or soil, and*
- *Decontaminating and decommissioning buildings that contain radioactive waste.*

Use numbers instead of bullets in a list only if the items are given in order of importance or occurrence or will be referred to later by number. Numbered lists within sentences—as in “The projects included (1) monitoring large areas, (2) cleaning up sites”—are generally unnecessary; simply omit the numbers.

**loan.** See **lend/loan**.

**loan-to-value (LTV) ratio.** The relationship between the amount of a loan (such as a mortgage) and the value of the underlying collateral. The LTV ratio is one measure that lenders use to assess the riskiness of a loan.

**local.** Lowercase (*local government*) unless part of a proper noun (*Local 323 of the American Federation of Musicians*).

**long run, long term.** Not hyphenated after a noun: *an effect in the long run*. Hyphenated before a noun: *a long-term effect*.

**long-term interest rate.** An interest rate associated with a security that matures in 10 or more years.

**low income.** Not hyphenated after a noun: *a family with low income*. Hyphenated before a noun: *a low-income family*. The same treatment applies to other phrases containing *low*, *lower*, or *lowest*. Exception: *people in the lowest income category*, in which “lowest” is modifying “income category” rather than just “income.”

**Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)**

# M

**macro-**. macrobiotic, macroeconomic, macroscopic. See **prefixes**.

**mail-order pharmacy**

**maintenance-of-effort payment**

**Majority Leader**. Always capitalized: *Majority Leader Harry Reid, the Majority Leader*.

**-maker, -making**. automaker, decisionmaker, decisionmaking, lawmaker, peacemaker, policymaker, policymaking, rulemaking, troublemaker. See **suffixes**.

**mal-**. maladjusted, malfunction, malpractice, malware. See **prefixes**.

**managed care**. Never hyphenated: *managed care programs*.

**managed competition**. Never hyphenated: *managed competition plan*.

**mandatory spending**. Never hyphenated: *mandatory spending provision*. Synonymous with **direct spending**, mandatory spending is the budget authority provided by laws other than appropriation acts and the outlays that result from that budget authority. (As used in many CBO reports, mandatory spending refers *only* to the outlays that result from budget authority provided in laws other than appropriation acts. See **spending/funding**.)

**man-hours**. Better to use *hours*, as in *If the project requires 100 hours of work, a 20-person team should be able to finish it in 5 hours*.

**manpower**. Better to use *personnel, workers*, or *labor force* whenever possible.

**marginal-cost pricing**

**marginal tax rate**. The percentage of an additional dollar of income from labor or capital that is paid in taxes. Compare with **effective tax rate** and **statutory tax rate**.

**Marine Corps**. Always treated as a singular noun: *The Marine Corps staged its landing at night*. Capitalize **Corps** on second reference: *The Corps will buy six new helicopters. The Corps' mission has changed over the years*. Capitalize **Marines** when referring to the service as a body rather than to individuals: *enlistment in the Marines, a Marine operation*. Lowercase it when referring to individual service members: *five marines, a company of marines*.

**markdown, markup** (n. and adj.); **mark down, mark up** (v.)

**market basket, market-basket index**. See, for example, **consumer price index**.

**market interest rate**

**marketplace**

**market risk**. Risk that investors cannot protect themselves against by diversifying their portfolios.

**market-value accounting**

**master's degree, master of arts (M.A.), master of science (M.S.)**

**materiel**. Equipment and supplies used by an institution: *The Army kept some of its materiel in storage overseas*.

**may/might**. In the present tense, **may** suggests a real possibility; **might** suggests a less certain possibility. When talking about hypothetical CBO options, **might** is usually preferable.

Note that **might** also functions as the past tense of **may**: *I think I may go now. He thought he might go today*.

**May** and **might** also differ when they are followed by **have**. **May have** implies that the writer does not know whether something happened or did not happen: *The bill may have passed*

*already*. **Might have** connotes that something could have happened but in fact did not: *If two more Senators had been present, the bill might have passed*.

**mayor**. See **titles of office**.

**MBS**. See **mortgage-backed securities**.

**M.D. (doctor of medicine)**. Refer to someone who holds this degree as a doctor or physician, not an M.D.

**mean/median**. A **mean** is an average; a **median** is a number in the exact middle of a series of numbers arranged in ascending or descending order.

**means of financing**. Means by which a budget deficit is financed or a surplus is used. The primary means of financing is borrowing from the public. In general, the cumulative amount borrowed from the public (debt held by the public) will increase if there is a deficit and decrease if there is a surplus, but other factors can affect the amount that the government must borrow. Those factors, known as *other means of financing*, include changes in the government's cash balances, seigniorage, changes in outstanding checks, changes in accrued interest costs included in the budget but not yet paid, and cash flows reflected in the financing accounts of federal credit programs. Means of financing are not included in federal budget totals.

**means test (n.), means-test (v.), means-tested, means-testing**

**means-tested program**. A program that provides cash or services to people who meet a test of need on the basis of income and assets. Most means-tested programs are entitlements—for example, Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income, family support programs, and veterans' pensions. A few, however, such as housing subsidies and various social services, are funded through discretionary appropriations.

**measure**. For legislative measures, see **act/bill/law/measure/resolution**; for units, see **units of measure**.

**Medical Insurance**. The official name for Part B of Medicare (the trust fund associated with Part B is the Supplementary Medical Insurance Trust Fund).

**Medicare**. This federal health insurance program for people age 65 or older has three parts: Hospital Insurance (Part A), Medical Insurance (Part B), and prescription drug coverage (Part D). Part C of Medicare (known as Medicare Advantage) specifies the rules under which private health care plans can assume responsibility for, and be compensated for, providing benefits covered under Parts A, B, and D.

**Medicare economic index (MEI)**

**Medicare fee schedule (MFS)**

**medigap insurance**

**megahertz (MHz)**

**Member**. Uppercase when referring to a Member of Congress: *The Member agreed to sponsor the bill. The Members of the Committee on Armed Services met yesterday*. Lowercase when referring to any other member: *an executive board member*.

**memorandum, memorandums (pl.)**

**meter (m)**

**methodology/method**. A **methodology** is the approach or framework employed by a particular discipline, such as economics, or in a particular analysis. A **method** is the steps or procedures used in carrying out the analysis. What most CBO analysts mean when describing how they arrived at their results is **method**. An appropriate subhead or reference, therefore, is *method used in the analysis* or, more simply, *analytic method*.

**metropolitan statistical area (MSA)**

**micro-**. microeconomic, micromanage, microscopic. See **prefixes**.

**mid-**. midafternoon, midair, midcourse, midday, middecade, midgrade, midlife, midpoint, midrange, midsize, midterm, midway, midweek, midyear, but mid-1980s, mid-ocean, mid-rise. See **prefixes**.

**middle-aged**

**Middle Atlantic states, mid-Atlantic states**

**Middle East, Mideast, Middle Eastern**

**Midwest, Midwestern, Midwesterner**

**might**. See **may/might**.

**miles per gallon (mpg)**

**miles per hour (mph)**

**military construction (MILCON) account**

**Military Health System (MHS)**

**military personnel (MILPERS) account**

**military retirement system (MRS)**. A blanket name for several retirement programs for service members.

**military treatment facility (MTF)**

**minimum, minimums (pl.)**

**minimum-wage worker**

**Minority Leader**. Always capitalized: *Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, the Minority Leader*.

**Minuteman III (MM III) missile**

**missile defense system**

**mix-up (n.), mix up (v.)**

**model, modeled, modeling**

**monetary policy**. The strategy of influencing the availability and cost of money and credit to affect output and inflation. An “easy” monetary policy attempts to reduce interest rates to increase aggregate demand, but it may lead to higher inflation. A “tight” monetary policy attempts to raise interest rates in the near term to reduce inflationary pressure by lowering aggregate demand. The Federal Reserve System sets monetary policy in the United States.

**monetary reserves**. The amount of funds that banks and other depository institutions hold as cash or as deposits with the Federal Reserve System.

**monetary stimulus**. A type of economic stimulus consisting of an increase in the availability of (and hence a lower cost for) money and credit that is intended to encourage economic activity. The Federal Reserve can lower short-term interest rates (and, to a lesser extent, long-term rates) by purchasing Treasury or other securities through its open-market operations. To a more limited extent, it can provide stimulus by reducing the reserve ratio (the percentage of assets that member banks are required to keep on deposit at the Federal Reserve) or by lowering the discount rate (the rate at which it lends money to member banks). Compare with **fiscal stimulus**.

**money, moneys (pl.)**. See **dollars and cents**.

**money market mutual fund**

**Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB)**. See **GI Bill**.

**monthlong**

**more than/over**. See **less than/under**.

**mortgage-backed securities (MBSs)**. Financial securities whose payments of interest and principal are backed by the payments from a pool of mortgages. MBSs are sometimes structured to create multiple classes of claims (or tranches) of different seniority and timing.

**mortgage interest deduction**

**motor vehicle industry**

**MSG multicountry model (MSG model).**

Originally the McKibbin-Sachs Global model, this tool was renamed after its distributor, the McKibbin Software Group. Later versions include the MSG2 and MSG3 models.

**multi-**. multiagency, multibillion-dollar savings, multicolored, multifold, multilateral, multimode, multinational, multiowner, multipayer, multirole, multiyear. See **prefixes**.

**multiple-employer plan**

**multiple-payer system, multipayer system**

**National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)**

**National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010, the 2010 defense authorization act**

**National Guard, the Guard.** The United States has two National Guards: the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard. Unless one is specified, readers will assume both are meant. See *reserve*.

**national health expenditures.** The preferred abbreviation is NHE (rather than “NHEs”), even though the term is plural. *Medicare spending increased as a percentage of NHE last year.* The same style applies to *personal health expenditures*.

**national income.** Total income earned by U.S. residents from all sources, including employees’ compensation (wages, salaries, benefits, and employers’ share of payroll taxes for social insurance programs), corporate profits, net interest, rental income, and proprietors’ income.

**national income and product accounts (NIPAs), NIPA data.** Official U.S. accounts that track the amount and composition of gross domestic product, the prices of its components, and the way in which the costs of production are distributed as income.

**National Institutes of Health (NIH).** Takes a singular verb or pronoun.

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)**

**National Priorities List (NPL).** Part of Superfund.

**national saving.** Total saving by all sectors of the economy: personal saving, business saving

(corporate after-tax profits not paid as dividends), and government saving (budget surpluses). National saving represents all income not consumed, publicly or privately, during a given period. As measured by the Bureau of Economic Analysis, national saving does not include unrealized capital gains or losses.

**National Science Foundation (NSF)**

**nationwide**

**Native American**

**natural rate of unemployment.** The rate of unemployment that results from all sources except fluctuations in aggregate demand. Those sources are *frictional unemployment*, which is associated with normal turnover of jobs, and *structural unemployment*, which includes unemployment caused by mismatches between the skills of available workers and the skills necessary to fill vacant positions and unemployment caused when wages exceed their market-clearing levels because of institutional factors (such as legal minimum wages, the presence of unions, social conventions, or wage-setting practices by employers that are intended to increase workers’ morale and effort).

**Naval Reserve.** See *reserve*.

**Navy.** Uppercase when referring to the U.S. Navy. Lowercase when referring to the services of other countries: *Japan’s navy*.

**near term.** Not hyphenated after a noun: *an effect in the near term*. Hyphenated before a noun: *a near-term effect*.

**net domestic product (NDP).** Gross domestic product minus depreciation of physical capital.

**net exports.** A country’s exports of goods and services minus its imports of goods and services. Also referred to as the *trade balance*.

**net interest.** In the federal budget, net interest comprises the government's interest payments on debt held by the public (as recorded in budget function 900), offset by interest income that the government receives on loans and cash balances and by earnings of the National Railroad Retirement Investment Trust.

**net national saving.** National saving minus depreciation of physical capital.

**net operating loss (NOL)**

**net present value.** Not hyphenated as a noun: *calculating the net present value*. Hyphenated as an adjective: *on a net-present-value basis*. See **present value**.

**net-receipt basis**

**network-model health maintenance organization**

**New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START).** Signed by the United States and Russia in April 2010.

**NIPAs.** See **national income and product accounts**.

**no-**. no-fault, no-load, no-man's-land, no-nonsense, no-win. See **prefixes**.

**nominal.** A measure based on current-dollar value. *Nominal income* and *spending* are measured in current dollars. The *nominal interest rate* on debt is the promised dollar return, without an adjustment to remove the effects of inflation. The *nominal exchange rate* is the rate at which a unit of one currency trades for a unit of another currency. Compare with **real**. See **constant dollars/current dollars**.

**non-**. noncommissioned, noncompliance, nonnuclear, nonpartisan, nonprofit, nonproliferation, nonvoting, but non-active-duty, non-means-tested, non-oil, non sequitur, non-work-related. See **prefixes**.

**none.** In terms of subject-verb agreement, **none** follows the same rule as collective nouns: If what follows **none** is plural, use a plural verb (*None of the studies are ready to be published*); if what follows is singular, use a singular verb (*None of the money is available yet*). Use a singular verb with a plural object only to emphasize the idea of "not a single one": *Of the 37 invited guests, none has bothered to reply*.

**north.** Lowercase when referring to a direction or general location: *a north wind, northward, northern Kentucky, northeastern Canada*. Uppercase when referring to a specific geographic or political region: *the Northeast, Northerner, Northern Hemisphere, the Pacific Northwest, North Africa, North Atlantic, North Pole*. Thus, note the distinction between *North Shore* (a section of Chicago suburbs) and *north shore* (a coastline).

**North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), North American free-trade area**

**North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)**

**not-for-profit**

**not only . . . but also.** Many writers have trouble with the proper placement of these correlative conjunctions. The grammatical construction that follows **not only** should parallel the construction that follows **but also**. For example, the sentence "He not only knew the Vice President but also the President" is incorrect, because **not only** is followed by a verb whereas **but also** is followed by a noun. The sentence should be *He knew not only the Vice President but also the President*.

**Also** may be deleted if the words that follow **but** intensify those that follow **not only** rather than simply add to them: *Her suggestion is not only shortsighted but dangerous*.

**noun stacks.** One of the plagues of bureaucratic writing is strings of nouns used as modifiers without a preposition in sight (as in a

Department of Energy publication titled “Risk Assessment Model Review Workshop Summary Report”). Noun stacks are hard to read—thus slowing down the reader—and they create confusion about which word in the stack modifies which other words.

Your ear should be your guide with noun stacks, but as a general rule, use no more than two nouns consecutively in a phrase, or three nouns if two of them form a recognized compound. For example, the phrase *corporate tax rates* is easy to read, but “corporate tax rate changes” is not (rewrite it as *changes in corporate tax rates*).

**nouns as adjectives.** Avoid the awkward use of nouns as adjectives (“the Administration plan,” “hospital financial performance,” “the government share of financing”) by making the nouns possessive (*the Administration’s plan, hospitals’ financial performance, the government’s share of financing*).

**Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), but nonproliferation**

**numbers.** See the box on page 48.

## Numbers

**Words or Numerals?** In general, write out numbers from zero through nine in text and use numerals for numbers greater than nine. That rule applies to cardinal and ordinal numbers: *two proposals, 10 years, the seventh month, the 21st century* (note that the *st* is not superscript).

Exceptions to that rule include the following:

- **Beginning of a sentence.** Write out any number that begins a sentence: *Twenty-five agencies cooperated on the program.* Rewrite, however, to avoid starting a sentence with a large number. For example, instead of “1989 was a very good year for the automobile industry,” write *For the automobile industry, 1989 was a very good year.*
- **Parallelism between single-digit and larger numbers.** When a pair or a series of similar items in the same sentence or paragraph contains at least one number greater than nine, all of the numbers in that series should be expressed as numerals for the sake of consistency: *The agency plans to award 7 grants in 2015 and a total of 47 grants between 2015 and 2020. CBO estimates the budgetary effects of such options over the next 2, 5, or 10 years.* The use of numerals for parallelism applies only to items in the same category; items in other categories in the same sentence or paragraph should follow the general rule for numbers: *Interest rates on 3-month Treasury bills and 10-year Treasury notes are expected to rise over the next four years.*
- **Money and percentages.** Use numerals: *a 3 cent surcharge, \$5 billion, 8 percent, an increase of 1 percentage point.* (Exceptions: *one-half of one percentage point, one dollar,* and indefinite numbers, such as *thousands of dollars.*)
- **Ratios.** Use numerals: *4 to 1; 4:1.*
- **Ages.** Use numerals for a person’s age: *a 3-year-old boy, children ages 7 to 11, people age 65 or older.* (Follow the general rule for ages of things: *three-year fight, a city that is more than 200 years old.*)
- **Time.** Express hours of the day as numerals: *2 p.m.* (Follow the general rule for other references to time: *six hours, two days, 15 weeks.*)
- **Weights and measures.** Use numerals with units of weight or measure, whether the unit is spelled out or abbreviated: *3 kilometers, 3 km; 5 miles per gallon, 5 mpg.* (Hyphenate compounds when the unit is spelled out but not when it is abbreviated: *200-meter race, 16 kWh battery.*) See **units of measure.**

**Large Numbers.** Numbers from 1,000 to 999,999 have commas, unless they refer to page numbers or years: *6,280 voters, a \$500,000 loan, pp. 1123–1246, in 2010.* Numbers larger than 999,999 are expressed as numeral-and-word combinations: *\$3 trillion budget, 6 million people.*

Avoid expressing billions as “thousands of millions” except in a series that consists primarily of numbers below 1 billion: *\$130 million, \$546 million, \$868 million, and \$1,072 million.* (Note that *million* is repeated for clarity.)

**Rounded Numbers.** When numerical data are rounded, include the following note (ordinarily on the “Notes” page at the front of the document rather than on each table): *Numbers in the text, tables, and figures may not add up to totals because of rounding.*

**Zero.** In text, spell out zero. Place a zero before the decimal point for quantities less than one (*0.05 percent*) unless the quantity is always less than one (*p < .05, a probability of .05*). In tables, use 0, not “0.0” or “0.00”; never use “-0” or “0 percent.” If a number in a table rounds to zero, replace it with an asterisk and add a note to the table such as \* = *between -\$500 million and \$500 million* or \* = *between zero and 0.5 percent.*

**O-3, O-4.** Military pay grades (in this case denoting officer ranks) are always hyphenated.

**obligate/oblige.** **Obligate** means “to bind under an obligation” (generally a legal one): *I am obligated by the terms of the will to pay you \$100.* **Oblige** means “to be bound by circumstance, to be in debt for a favor or service, or to do a favor”: *I am obliged to go to New York tomorrow. Will you oblige me by coming to the airport?*

**obligation.** A legally binding commitment by the federal government that will result in outlays, immediately or in the future. An *obligation delay* is legislation that precludes the obligation of an amount of budget authority provided in another law until some time after the date on which the budget authority would normally become available. An *obligation limitation* is a provision (typically in an appropriation act) that restricts or reduces the availability of budget authority that would have become available under another law.

**obviate/eliminate.** **Obviate** means “to anticipate and prevent something” (*By resigning, Rick obviated his dismissal*) or “to make something unnecessary” (*The bypass obviates having to drive through the city*). **Eliminate** means “to remove or get rid of something” (*He eliminated the problem of how to get to the party by deciding not to go*). The phrase “obviate the need for” is redundant; use *eliminate the need for* or rewrite the sentence.

**of course.** See **therefore**.

**off-** off-base, off-key, off-limits, off-line, off-peak, off-ramp, off-season, off-site, but offhand, offset, offshore. See **prefixes**.

**-off.** As nouns, blastoff, cutoff, drop-off, layoff, payoff, runoff, send-off, sign-off, spin-off, standoff, takeoff, trade-off, write-off. (As verbs, those compounds are all two separate words.) See **suffixes**.

**off-budget.** Always hyphenated. A program is off-budget if its spending or revenues are excluded from the budget totals by law. For instance, the outlays and revenues of the two Social Security trust funds (the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund and the Disability Insurance Trust Fund) and the transactions of the Postal Service are off-budget (although they are included in the total budget).

**Office of Management and Budget (OMB)**

**offsetting collections, offsetting receipts.**

Funds collected by government agencies from other government accounts or from the public in businesslike or market-oriented transactions that are credited to an expenditure account (in the case of offsetting collections) or a receipt account (in the case of offsetting receipts). Both types of collections are treated for budgetary purposes as negative budget authority and outlays. Collections that result from the government’s exercise of its sovereign or governmental powers are ordinarily classified as revenues, but they are classified as offsetting collections or offsetting receipts when a law requires it.

**often.** A good substitute for *frequently*, as in *The missile misfired often before it was finally launched.* **Often** should be used only to indicate repetition in time, however. Do not write “Localities often reported noncompliance with the regulation” if what you mean is *Localities generally reported noncompliance with the regulation* or *Many localities reported noncompliance with the regulation.*

**oil field, oil-field equipment**

**Okun’s law.** A rule of thumb, named after economist Arthur Okun, that generalizes that an increase of 1 percentage point in the unemployment rate is accompanied by a loss of roughly 2.5 percent in gross domestic product.

**Old-Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI)**

**Trust Fund, the OASI trust fund.** One of the trust funds for Social Security. The other is the Disability Insurance Trust Fund.

**Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI).**

A collective name for Social Security.

**on.** Synonymous with “upon” but almost always preferable: *The poverty level depends on family size.* See the box about **Plain English** on page 53.

**on-** on-base, onboard, on-budget, ongoing, online, on-ramp, onset, onshore, on-site. See **prefixes**.

**-on.** As nouns or adjectives, carry-on, run-on, slip-on. (As verbs, those compounds are all two separate words.) See **suffixes**.

**only.** Place **only** before the word it modifies to ensure the correct meaning: *Only the three of us are going to the store* (no one else is going). *The three of us are only going to the store* (we are not doing anything else).

**open-enrollment period**

**operation and maintenance (O&M)**

**operation and support (O&S)**

**optimal/optimum.** **Optimal** means “the most desirable or satisfactory.” **Optimum** means “the best possible for a given end or under a given set of conditions.”

**option.** Lowercase unless used with a number (*under this option, Options 1 and 4*).

**Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)**

**Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)**

**out-** outdoor, outmaneuver, outnumber, outpatient, outperform, output, outweigh, but out-year. See **prefixes**.

**-out.** As nouns, closeout, dropout, fallout, hideout, payout, phaseout, pullout, walkout, but fade-out. (As verbs, those compounds are all two separate words.) See **suffixes**.

**Outer Continental Shelf (OCS)**

**outlays.** Spending to pay a federal obligation. Outlays may pay for obligations incurred in a prior fiscal year or in the current year; hence, they flow partly from unexpended balances of prior-year budget authority and partly from budget authority provided for the current year. Also see **spending/funding**.

**out of pocket.** Not hyphenated after a noun or a verb (*The expenses were paid out of pocket*). Hyphenated before a noun (*out-of-pocket expenses*). The same treatment applies to *out of network*.

**out-year.** Always hyphenated. An **out-year** is a fiscal year beyond the budget year (the fiscal year for which the budget is being considered). **Out-years** is jargon, so if it cannot be replaced by a more familiar phrase—such as *succeeding years*—it should be defined on first use in a document.

**over-** overabundant, overall, overproduce, overreach, override, oversee. See **prefixes**.

**-over.** As nouns or adjectives, carryover, changeover, leftover, spillover, takeover, turnover. (As verbs, those compounds are all two separate words.) See **suffixes**.

**over/more than.** See **less than/under**.

**Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC)**

# P

**Pacific Islanders.** People born or living in any of the Pacific islands that make up the regions of Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia—including Hawaii, Tahiti, Samoa, Fiji, Guam, and New Guinea.

**Pacific Rim countries.** The nations that border the Pacific Ocean, particularly those in Asia.

**Panel of Economic Advisers, Panel of Health Advisers.** Capitalized when referring to CBO's advisory groups.

**participating provider agreement**

**part time.** Not hyphenated after a noun (*The job is part time*) or after a verb (*He works part time*). Hyphenated before a noun (*a part-time job*).

**pass.** See **adopt/agree to/approve/enact/pass/ratify**.

**passive voice.** See the box about **Active and Passive Voice** on page 3.

**pass-through** (n. and adj.), **pass through** (v.)

**past.** See **last/latest/past**.

**Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111-148).** One of two laws enacted in March 2010 that made major changes to the U.S. health care and health insurance systems. (The other was the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010, P.L. 111-152.) See **Affordable Care Act**.

**pay-as-you-go (PAYGO).** Procedures established in law or in House and Senate rules that are intended to ensure that laws affecting mandatory spending or revenues are deficit neutral over some period of time. When the term is used in headings or titles, all four words are capitalized: *Pay-As-You-Go Scorecard*.

**pay grade.** Military pay grades are expressed as E-2, O-5, and so on and are always hyphenated.

**payload**

**pay raise.** Always two words and never hyphenated.

**PCE price index.** See **price index for personal consumption expenditures**.

**PDF.** Stands for *portable document format*; no need to spell it out.

**peacetime**

**Pell grant.** See **Federal Pell Grant Program**.

**Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC)**

**people.** Preferable to “persons,” which sounds stilted, and to “individuals,” except when differentiating between individuals and groups of people (such as families). Also see **individual/person**.

**per.** per capita (never hyphenated), per-case payment, per-person cost, cost per person. Because **per** is a preposition of fewer than four letters, it is not capitalized in titles or headings.

**per annum.** See the box about **Foreign Phrases and Abbreviations** on page 27.

**percent.** One word (not “per cent”); generally spelled out in text and tables. **Percent** takes a singular or plural verb depending on whether the “of” construction that follows it (whether explicitly or implicitly) is singular or plural: *Nearly 40 percent of the spending is for non-essential items. Almost 35 percent of the workers are on vacation; another 28 percent are out sick.*

**percent/percentage.** Although similar in meaning (*Webster's* gives **percentage** as a synonym for **percent**), the two words are not interchangeable at CBO. **Percent** is used to denote a definite proportion and appears only after a number: *23 percent of expenditures*,

*37 percent of agency personnel. Percentage is used for an unspecified portion or share of a whole: defense spending rose as a percentage of GDP.*

**Percentage** is also the adjective form: *percentage change*.

Always express percentages in numerals:

*0.01 percent, 6 percent, 98 percent.* In a range or series, **percent** is repeated for clarity: *between 8 percent and 11 percent* (not “8 and 11 percent”); *an increase of 4 percent, 6 percent, or 9 percent.* If a percentage is less than one, put a zero before the decimal point: *0.3 percent.* See **decimals** and **fractions**.

**percentage points.** The difference between two percentages is expressed in percentage points: *The President’s approval rating rose by 7 percentage points, from 41 percent to 48 percent.*

Percentage points are expressed as numerals and are generally plural, to conform with spoken language, even if the number is less than one: *0.2 percentage points.* Exceptions: *1 percentage point, 0.1 percentage point.* The adjective form is hyphenated: *a 9 percentage-point reduction* (but better to write *a reduction of 9 percentage points*).

Be careful to distinguish between an increase of X percent and an increase of X percentage points. If revenues rise relative to GDP from 18 percent to 21 percent, that is an increase of 3 percentage points, or almost 17 percent (not 3 percent).

**Perkins loan.** See **Federal Perkins Loan Program**.

**permit, permitted, permitting**

**per se.** See the box about **Foreign Phrases and Abbreviations** on page 27.

**Persian Gulf, Persian Gulf states, Persian Gulf War, the Gulf** (region), **the gulf** (body of water)

**person.** See **individual/person** and **people**.

**personal health expenditures.** The preferred abbreviation is PHE (rather than “PHEs”), even though the term is plural. *Spending on hospital care increased as a percentage of PHE last year.* The same style applies to *national health expenditures*.

**personal income.** The income that people receive, including transfer payments, such as Social Security benefits.

**personal saving.** Saving by households. Personal saving equals disposable personal income minus spending for consumption, interest payments, and transfer payments. The *personal saving rate* is personal saving as a percentage of disposable personal income.

**phase-in** (n. and adj.), **phase in** (v.)

**phaseout** (n. and adj.), **phase out** (v.)

**Ph.D. (doctor of philosophy).** The plural is *Ph.D.s*.

**phenomenon, phenomena** (pl.)

**physicians’ services.** Not “physician services.” See **nouns as adjectives**.

**pickup** (n. and adj.), **pick up** (v.)

**P.L.** See **Public Law**.

**play or pay, the play-or-pay plan**

**plurals.** Although the plural of most English nouns is formed by adding *s* (*banks, dollars*)—or *es* if the noun ends in *ch, s, sh, j, x, or z* (*lunches, taxes*)—many exceptions and special cases exist. Unless shown otherwise in this style guide, CBO follows the first choice shown in an entry in *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* ([www.m-w.com](http://www.m-w.com)).

### Plain English

Strunk and White's maxim "Omit needless words" should be a guiding principle for every CBO writer. Using wordy phrases in an effort to sound more formal or serious is tempting, but it adds to the length and complexity of writing and forces readers to work harder. When reviewing their writing, authors should keep simplicity in mind and try to avoid ponderous phrases such as these:

Wordy	Simple
as a means of	to
at the present time	now
due to the fact that	because
during the course of	during, while
during the period	during, while
for a period of	for
for the purpose of	for, to
in a timely manner	on time, promptly
in close proximity to	near
in order that	so
in regard to	about
in the amount of	for
in the event that	if
in the near future	soon, shortly
in the process of	(omit)
point in time	point, time
successfully complete	complete, pass
under the provisions of	under
until such time as	until
with the exception of	except for

Writers should also keep an eye out for long or multisyllabic words where shorter ones will do. If sentences are long or material is complex, one way to make writing easier to read is to substitute *about* for "concerning" or "regarding," *end* for "terminate," *help* for "facilitate," *later* for "subsequent," *spending* for "expenditures," *total* for "aggregate," *use* for "utilize," and so forth.

**PLUS loans.** Although originally called Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students, these loans are now available to graduate students as well as to parents of undergraduates and are known simply as PLUS loans.

**p.m.** Stands for *post meridiem*. Never use with "afternoon" or "evening": *4 p.m., at 7:30 in the evening.*

**point-of-service (POS) plan**

**policy-** policyholder, policymaker, policymaking. See **prefixes**.

**possessives.** See the box about **Possessives** on page 54.

**post-** postgraduate, postoperative, postsecondary, postwar, but post–Cold War era, post–World War II period. See **prefixes**.

**Postal Service (USPS).** No need to add "U.S." before the name when introducing the abbreviation.

**Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33).** After its first use in a document, refer to the Post-9/11 GI Bill as the *Chapter 33 program*, which pays *Chapter 33 benefits*. See **GI Bill**.

**postwar.** When using this term, be sure to specify which war you mean.

**potential gross domestic product.** The maximum sustainable level of gross domestic product. That level corresponds to a high rate of use of labor and capital. See **potential output**.

**potential labor force.** The labor force adjusted for movements in the business cycle. Specifically, it is the labor force that exists when the unemployment rate equals the natural rate of unemployment (the rate that results from all sources except fluctuations in aggregate demand). The number of hours worked by the potential labor force is referred to as *potential hours worked*.

### Possessives

**Possessives of Nouns.** The possessive case of a singular noun is formed by adding apostrophe s: *the project's budget, the committee's request.*

Plural nouns ending in s take an apostrophe only: *the policies' effects, the Joneses' dog, but women's rights* (plural not ending in s).

Proper nouns, abbreviations, and most nouns ending in sibilants (s, x, z, sh, ch) take apostrophe s: *the Congress's deliberations, Senator Jones's bill, the MX's guidance system, Alcatraz's inmates.* Exceptions: *the United States' obligations, the United Nations' budget, the Marine Corps' policy.* (For further treatment of possessives and some exceptions to the rules, see *The Chicago Manual of Style*.)

**Singular Noun With a Plural Possessive.** In most cases, a plural possessive should be followed by a singular noun when only one of the things possessed belongs to each individual: *The passengers held their breath as the plane began to shake. Most workers earn more now than they did in their previous job.*

In CBO writing, this issue arises most often with the word **income**: *People participating in the Medicare program are also eligible for Medicaid benefits if their income is low enough. Housing costs are considered affordable to renters whose income is above a certain threshold.* Similarly, use a singular noun when a plural possessive is implied: *people with low income.*

**Possessives With Gerunds.** The possessive case is sometimes necessary before a gerund (a verb ending in -ing that acts as a noun) to show that the gerund is “owned” by the noun or pronoun preceding it: *All of us worry about Sally's smoking. Lee objected to our eating the whole cheesecake.* Failure to use the possessive when needed can change the meaning of a sentence. For instance, *My brother loves that woman singing* suggests that the brother loves the woman; *My brother loves that woman's singing* suggests that he loves the singing.

If using the possessive with a gerund sounds awkward (frequently the case in long or complex sentences), revise the sentence. Correct but awkward: *Spending decreased because of several large pharmaceutical firms' changing their behavior.* A better alternative: *Spending decreased because several large pharmaceutical firms changed their behavior.*

**potential output.** The maximum sustainable level of production. That level corresponds to a high rate of use of labor and capital. Potential output for the national economy is also referred to as *potential gross domestic product.*

**pounds per square inch (psi)**

**poverty level/poverty line.** See **federal poverty guidelines/federal poverty thresholds.**

**power marketing administration (PMA)**

**pre-** preadmission, preadolescent, prearrange, predetermine, preemptive, preexisting, prepay, preregister, preretirement, pretax, prewar, but pre-engineered. See **prefixes.**

**preferred provider organization (PPO)**

**prefixes.** To determine whether a prefix forms a hyphenated or a closed compound, refer to the entries for specific prefixes in this style guide or to *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* ([www.m-w.com](http://www.m-w.com)), not online spell-check programs. Most words formed with prefixes are not hyphenated. Exceptions include compounds that contain a capitalized word or a number (*sub-Saharan, mid-2007*), multiword compounds (*non-means-tested*), and potentially confusing compounds (*recover*, to regain, *re-cover*, to cover again). Other exceptions are compounds formed with *all-*, *ex-*, *no-*, or *self-*, which are usually hyphenated, and those formed with

*in-*, *off-*, or *on-*, which are about equally likely to be hyphenated or not hyphenated.

If a hyphenated word with a prefix appears in a heading or title, only the prefix should be capitalized (*History of Anti-inflationary Policies*).

**prepositions.** Avoid imprecise prepositions when precise ones exist. Write *information about the policy*, *details of the plan* (rather than “information on” or “details on”) and *concerns about inflation*, *dissatisfaction with the change* (rather than “concerns over” or “dissatisfaction over”).

In certain contexts, ending a sentence with a preposition is acceptable. *He received the award he had hoped for* is stronger than “He received the award for which he had hoped.” Another acceptable example: *After the Congress passes this bill, no further action will be called for.*

In headings or titles, do not capitalize prepositions unless they contain at least four letters (*in*, *for*, *With*, *Through*) or are an inseparable part of a verb (*Five Steps to Clean Up Hazardous Waste*).

**presently.** Can mean either “before long” (*An aide assures me that the mayor will arrive presently*) or “at the present time” (*The board is turning its attention to personnel spending, presently the fastest-growing part of the budget*). To avoid confusion about which meaning is intended, consider using *soon* or *now* instead.

**present value** (n.), **present-value** (adj.). A single number that expresses a flow of current and future income (or payments) in terms of an equivalent lump sum received (or paid) today. The present value depends on the rate of interest (known as the *discount rate*) that is used to translate future cash flows into current dollars. For example, if \$100 is invested on January 1 at an annual interest rate of 5 percent, it will grow to \$105 by January 1 of the next year. Hence, at an annual 5 percent interest rate, the present value of \$105 payable a year from today is \$100.

**President, Presidential.** Uppercase when referring to the President of the United States: *The President asserted* or *by Presidential directive*. Any other president takes a lowercase **p** unless the word is used before the person’s name: *the president of Harvard*, *President Faust of Harvard*, *the presidents of 12 nations*.

**President-elect**

**pretax.** See **before-tax income**.

**preventive** (not “preventative”)

**price-conscious.** Always hyphenated.

**price index for personal consumption expenditures (PCE price index).** A summary measure of the prices of all goods and services that make up personal consumption expenditures. The Federal Reserve uses measures based on the PCE price index as its primary measures of inflation in conducting monetary policy because those measures better represent consumers’ current spending patterns than the consumer price index does. The PCE price index is also known as the *chained price index for personal consumption expenditures*.

**price support.** Never hyphenated: *price support programs*.

**primary care.** Never hyphenated: *primary care physician*.

**primary deficit or surplus.** The total budget deficit or surplus excluding net interest.

**primary insurance amount (PIA)**

**principle/principal.** A **principle** is a law, doctrine, assumption, or code of conduct. A **principal** is one who is in charge, has authority, or is in a leading position; **principal** also refers to a sum of capital earning interest or due as a debt. As an adjective, **principal** means “first in importance, rank, or degree.” *The principal suspended the principal troublemakers on principle.*

**prior to.** A stilted phrase; use *before* instead.

**prior-year outlays**

**private saving.** Saving by households and businesses. Private saving equals personal saving plus after-tax corporate profits minus dividends paid.

**private sector (n.), private-sector (adj.)**

**problem, problematic**

**producer price index (PPI).** A measure of average changes in the prices received in all stages of processing by producers in various sectors of the economy (such as manufacturing, agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining, gas and electricity, and public utilities). The PPI is published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

**producers' durable equipment (PDE).**

Primarily nonresidential capital equipment (such as computers, machines, and transportation equipment) owned by businesses.

**productivity.** Average real (inflation-adjusted) output per unit of input. *Labor productivity* is average real output per hour of labor. The growth of labor productivity is defined as the growth of real output that is not explained by the growth of labor input alone. *Total factor productivity* is average real output per unit of combined labor and capital services. The growth of total factor productivity is defined as the growth of real output that is not explained by the growth of labor and capital. Labor productivity and total factor productivity differ in that increases in capital per worker raise labor productivity but not total factor productivity.

**profit sharing (n.), profit-sharing (adj.)**

**program (n.).** Lowercase unless the word is officially part of the program's name. A handy rule of thumb is to capitalize **program** if it is included in the program's abbreviation: *Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP)*, *Child Support Enforcement (CSE) program*.

**program (v.), programmed, programming, programmable, programmatic**

**program account.** A budgetary account associated with a federal credit program that receives an appropriation of the subsidy cost of that program's loan obligations or commitments as well as (in some cases) the program's administrative expenses. From the program account, the subsidy cost is disbursed to the applicable financing account.

**pronouns.** See the box about **Pronouns** on page 57.

**pro rata share, prorated**

**prospective payment system (PPS)**

**proved/proven.** **Proved** is the past tense and the preferred past participle of the verb "to prove": *The lawyer has proved the defendant's innocence.* **Proven** is used at CBO only as an adjective: *a proven formula.*

**pseudo-** pseudonym, pseudoscience. See **prefixes.**

**Public Health Service (PHS)**

**public housing agency (PHA)**

**Public Law (P.L.).** Uppercase when referring to a specific law (*Public Law 102-378*), otherwise lowercase (*it is a matter of public law*). Spell out **Public Law** on first use in a section of a report (main text, stand-alone summary, appendix, or box); use the abbreviation **P.L.** in that section thereafter.

In a passing reference to a law—when the law is mentioned only once or twice in a document and specific provisions are not highlighted—it is not necessary to include the public law number. An exception is made in *The Budget and Economic Outlook* and similar "reference documents," where P.L. numbers should be included for all laws enacted in the current or previous Congress and for any other laws for which a P.L. number may be useful for research

## Pronouns

The pronoun problem at CBO is confined to two areas: the first person (to whom does “we” apply?) and sexism and how to avoid it in the third-person singular.

**First-Person Pronouns.** Avoid using **we** and other first-person pronouns—**I, me, us, our**—in CBO reports. They can raise too many questions in a reader’s mind about the people being referred to. We, the authors of this study? We, CBO? We, the United States? Or we, the human race?

When voicing the analysis and conclusions of the agency, use *CBO* rather than “we.” When referring to the Congress, the federal government, the population of the United States, or some other subject, state that explicitly. For example, instead of saying “We have made enormous progress in eradicating tuberculosis,” say *Medical science has made enormous progress in eradicating tuberculosis*.

Exceptions may be made in testimony, letters, cost estimates, blog entries, or working papers when it is clear that **I** refers to the testifier or writer and **we** refers to CBO.

**Sexism in Pronouns.** The English language, abundantly rich in many respects, lacks a third-person singular pronoun that does not indicate gender. Some writers try to work around that problem by alternating the use of **he** and **she** in general statements, but such an approach can seem artificial or cause confusion.

One rule is clear, however: When a single person is referred to—say, a legislator, a taxpayer, or a program beneficiary—a singular pronoun is required. The plural **they** (as in “ask the next customer if they want coffee”) is ungrammatical.

When referring to an unidentified person, use **he or she** and **his or her**: *When can a recipient collect his or her benefit payment? If a taxpayer earns less than a certain amount, he or she may participate in the program.* If that construction becomes too clumsy, write around the problem. One simple way is to make the unidentified parties consistently plural: *When can recipients collect their benefits?*

The **he or she** construction should be used when referring to a general category of people who might be of either sex. Thus, when discussing an officeholder, but not a specific person, proper reference should take this form: *The Secretary of Transportation, under authority granted to him or her by statute, may determine compliance with the rule.* That construction could, however, be circumvented this way: *By statute, the Secretary of Transportation has authority to determine compliance with the rule.* When the reference is to a specific officeholder, the problem disappears: *Justice Kagan made the point in her dissenting opinion.*

purposes. In addition, if the P.L. number would be helpful to distinguish a law from others with similar names (especially names that do not contain a year), it may be included even in a passing reference.

When discussing a law in depth or highlighting a specific provision, use a more complete legal citation in a footnote, following the guidelines in the **Footnotes and References** section that begin on page 90. When in doubt about a legal citation, consult the General Counsel’s office.

**public-private partnership**

**public sector** (n.), **public-sector** (adj.)

**punctuation.** See **colon, comma, dashes, ellipsis, hyphenation and compound words, quotation marks, and semicolon.** For more information about punctuation, see *The Chicago Manual of Style, Words Into Type,* or *The New York Public Library Writer’s Guide to Style and Usage.*

**purchasing-power parity**

# Q

**quasi-**. quasi-governmental, quasi-judicial, quasiperiodic, quasi-public. See **prefixes**.

**quite**. This modifier is vague and detracts from the clear prose CBO aims for. Use it sparingly.

**quotation marks**. With anything other than a direct quotation, use quotation marks sparingly for emphasis or to highlight slang or jargon, but only on first reference. In the case of jargon, rewriting is a better choice; see **jargon**.

The rules for using quotation marks with other punctuation vary. Periods and commas always go inside quotation marks, whether the marks surround an entire sentence or just a word: *Then he said, "I think the sky is falling." In the*

*case of "ghost beneficiaries," the Congress could take several actions.*

Colons, semicolons, and dashes go outside quotation marks: *EPA must meet the standards deemed "relevant and appropriate"; who will define those criteria, however, is unclear. "I never met a dog I didn't like"—that was what the mail carrier said, anyway.*

Exclamation points and question marks go inside quotation marks only if they are part of the quoted material: *Thompson yelled, "Stop that immediately!" Did the Senator really call her opponent a "wolf in sheep's clothing"?*

# R

**racial and ethnic designations.** Capitalization in racial, ethnic, and cultural designations follows the rules applying to the proper and common nouns from which those designations derive. Here is a list of correct forms: *African American, Asian American, black, Caucasian, Hispanic, Hispanic American, Indian* (in the context of federal programs; otherwise, *Native American*), *Latina, Latino, nonwhite* (to be defined whenever used), *Pacific Islander, white*.

## Railroad Retirement benefits

**RAND Corporation** (thereafter just **RAND**).

A think tank headquartered in Santa Monica, California, with offices in Arlington, Virginia, and elsewhere.

**ranges.** Express numerical ranges according to the following examples: *the 1984–1989 period* (with an en dash); *the period from 1965 to 1975* (without an en dash); *beneficiaries in the \$1,000–\$1,250 annual income bracket; retirees in the age range between 61 and 66 years; a revenue loss in the \$3.7 billion–\$4.2 billion range* (repeat “billion”); *estimates ranging between 7 percent and 11 percent* (repeat “percent”).

## Ranking Member, Ranking Minority

**Member.** Use the term that the Member in question favors (as indicated on the Member’s or committee’s stationery or website). Always capitalized.

**rather.** This modifier is vague and detracts from the clear prose CBO aims for. Use it sparingly.

**ratify.** See **adopt/agree to/approve/enact/pass/ratify**.

**ratios and comparisons.** Use numerals to express ratios: *The unemployment rate among young black men compared with the rate among young white men is almost 2 to 1. That 2-to-1 ratio has persisted for years.* Use hyphens to express

comparisons in text that involve words rather than numerals: *the debt-to-asset ratio*, but *the ratio of debts to assets*.

**re-.** reappear, reauction, recover (to regain), re-cover (to cover again), recreate (to take recreation), re-create (to create anew), reelect, reemploy, reenter, reexport, refund, reignite, remake, reopen. See **prefixes**.

**real.** Adjusted to remove the effects of inflation. Compare with **nominal**. See **constant dollars/current dollars**.

**real estate agent** (someone who sells real estate), **Realtor** (a real estate agent who is a member of the National Association of Realtors)

**receipt account.** An account established within federal funds and trust funds to record offsetting receipts or revenues credited to that fund. The receipt account typically finances the obligations and outlays from an associated expenditure account.

**receipts.** See **revenues**.

**recession.** A significant decline in economic activity that is spread across the economy; lasts more than a few months; and normally is visible in production, employment, real income, and other indicators. A recession begins just after the economy reaches a peak of activity and ends when the economy reaches its trough.

**recision.** See **rescission**.

**reconciliation.** A special Congressional procedure used to implement the revenue and spending targets established in a budget resolution. Reconciliation affects revenues, mandatory spending, and offsetting receipts but usually not discretionary spending.

**reconnaissance**

**recordkeeping**

**recovery.** A significant, broad-based increase in economic activity that begins just after the economy reaches a trough of activity and ends when the economy reaches the level of its previous peak.

**reduction in force (RIF), reductions in force (RIFs)**

**referendum, referendums** (pl.)

**regarding.** A better choice is *about*, which is shorter, easier to read, and means the same thing. See the box about **Plain English** on page 53.

**regime/regimen.** Although these words are often used interchangeably, careful writers observe the following distinction: A **regime** is a form of government or a government in power; a **regimen** is a prescribed routine, a regular course of action, or a systematic plan.

**Representative.** Used as a title for Members of the U.S. House of Representatives who prefer it to **Congressman** or **Congresswoman**. (Check with the Member's office to determine such preferences.) In those cases, **Representative** is uppercase: *During the hearing, Representative Susan Smith presented several charts.* In contexts not related to the U.S. Congress, **representative** is lowercase: *Several conferees, representatives of interest groups, argued for the policy change.*

**rescission.** Means “the act of rescinding.” In budgetary terms, **rescission** refers to the withdrawal of authority to incur financial obligations that was previously provided by law and has not yet expired. (The related word **recision**, which means “cancellation,” is a general, nonlegal term and should not be used in budgetary references.)

**research and development (R&D)**

**research, development, test, and evaluation (RDT&E)**

**reserve.** Lowercase when referring collectively to the non-active-duty part of the military (the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps Reserves; the Army and Air National Guards; and others): *the reserve component* or *the reserves numbered fewer than 1 million members by 1996.* Uppercase when referring to a specific Reserve: *The active Marine Corps took part in this operation, but the Reserve did not.* See **Guard**.

**resolution.** Lowercase when referring informally or generally to a piece of legislation: *The resolution was brought to the floor or when the second concurrent resolution was agreed to.* Uppercase when part of an official title: *the Second Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 1983.* Also see **act/bill/law/measure/resolution**.

**Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 (RCRA)**

**retro-**. retroactive, retrofit, retrograde, retrospect. See **prefixes**.

**return.** To avoid confusion, talk about returns *to* a person or place and *on* or *from* an investment: *With interest rates so low, the return to depositors on savings is small.*

**revenues.** Funds collected from the public that arise from the government's exercise of its sovereign or governmental powers. Federal revenues come from a variety of sources, including individual and corporate income taxes, excise taxes, customs duties, estate and gift taxes, fees and fines, and payroll taxes for social insurance programs. Also known as *governmental receipts*.

In many cases, *revenues* and *receipts* can be used as synonyms: *income tax revenues, income tax receipts*. Note, however, that whereas all federal revenues are receipts, not all federal receipts are revenues. For example, oil companies' payments

to the federal government for the right to drill on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) are counted in the budget as offsetting receipts rather than as revenues; thus, they are referred to as *OCS receipts*, not “OCS revenues.”

*Revenues* is preferable to *revenue*, except as an adjective (*revenue laws*) or when modified by *much* or *less* (*How much revenue would the proposal raise? Less revenue than last year*).

**risk taking.** Not hyphenated as a noun: *her approach to risk taking*. Hyphenated as an adjective: *risk-taking behavior*. The same style applies to *risk adjustment*, *risk management*, *risk selection*, *risk sorting*, and *risk spreading*.

**risk-weighted asset**

**river.** Lowercase in general references: *emptying into smaller rivers*. Uppercase when referring to specific rivers: *the Delaware River, the Potomac and Patapsco Rivers*.

**rulemaking** (n. and adj.)

**rural statistical area (RSA)**

**Rural Utilities Service (RUS)**

# S

**S. 273.** The S stands for *Senate*, and 273 is the number of the bill. No need to spell it out.

**sale, salable** (not “saleable”)

**saving/savings.** **Saving** is a process or activity, and **savings** are what result. **Savings** is commonly used as a modifier, as in *savings account* or *savings bond*. But the national total used in CBO reports is the *saving rate*. Treat **savings** as a plural noun: *The savings are limited to three programs*.

**savings and loan associations (S&Ls).** They are associations or institutions, not banks.

**S. Con. Res.** Stands for *Senate concurrent resolution*. No need to spell it out when used with a number: *S. Con. Res. 10*.

**S corporation (or Subchapter S corporation).**

A domestically owned corporation with no more than 100 owners who have elected to pay taxes under subchapter S of the Internal Revenue Code. An S corporation is taxed like a partnership: It is exempt from corporate income taxes, but its owners pay individual income taxes on all of the business’s profits, even if some of those profits are retained by the company.

**sea-launched cruise missile (SLCM)**

**search-and-destroy mission**

**seasons.** Lowercase: *summer, fall, autumn, winter, spring*.

**Secretary.** See **titles of office**.

**section.** Lowercase when referring to part of a piece of legislation or a legal code: *section 212 of the act*. Uppercase when referring to a program: *Section 8 housing*.

**Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)**

**securitization.** A financial process that involves aggregating a number of assets into a pool (in many cases, by selling them to an entity specifically created for that purpose) and then issuing a new set of securities backed by the assets and the flows of income they generate. The aggregation of assets is intended to redistribute (and thus dilute) the risk that any of the assets will fail to generate the expected income flows.

**seigniorage.** The gain to the government from the difference between the face value of currency and coins put into circulation and the cost of producing them. Seigniorage is considered a **means of financing** and is not included in federal budget totals.

**select/selected.** As a verb, **select** means “choose.” As an adjective, **select** means “superior” or “choice” and **selected** means “chosen.” Do not write “data from select jurisdictions” when what you mean is *data from selected jurisdictions* or *data from a sample of jurisdictions*.

**self-** self-explanatory, self-government, self-respect. See **prefixes**.

**-self.** herself, himself, oneself. See **suffixes**.

**SEMATECH.** A consortium of international companies formed to research and develop semiconductor technology.

**semi-** semiannual, semicircular, semicolon, semifinal, semitrailer, semiweekly, but semi-independent, semi-industrialized. See **prefixes** and **bi-/semi-**.

**semicolon.** Use a semicolon when you want to link related independent clauses that would otherwise be separated by a period: *The ramifications of systemic changes to the health care system are uncertain; even the outcomes of incremental changes are hard to predict*. In such usage,

semicolons sometimes suggest a cause-and-effect relationship: *The attempt to filibuster the bill failed; not enough Senators showed up.*

When independent clauses are divided by words such as *however, thus, therefore, indeed, besides, furthermore,* or *otherwise*, the proper punctuation between the clauses is a semicolon, not a period or a comma: *Carol planned to go; however, she was delayed at the last minute. The ad promised free tickets; otherwise, we would not be here.*

Semicolons should also separate items in a series that has internal commas: *The average growth rate since the oil shock of 1973 has been about 0.75 percent; since World War II, about 1.5 percent; and since 1900, about 1.25 percent.*

**Senate, Senator.** Uppercase in all references to the U.S. Senate or a U.S. Senator, whether specific or general: *As Senator Kennedy proposed, the Senators debated the amendment. The Senate vote was delayed.* Lowercase in other references: *Williams was elected a state senator.* Also see **Congressional correspondence.**

**sequester.** A verb; the noun is **sequestration.**

**sequestration.** An enforcement mechanism by which the President orders the cancellation of budgetary resources in amounts sufficient to eliminate the following: a debit on the statutory pay-as-you-go scorecards created by the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, a breach of discretionary spending caps under the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, or a deficit as calculated under the Budget Control Act of 2011.

**services.** Intangible commodities, such as education or health care, as opposed to such tangible commodities as cars or clothing, which are goods.

**session of Congress**

**set-aside** (n. and adj.), **set aside** (v.)

**sex.** See **gender/sex.**

**shipbuilding**

**ships.** Names of individual naval vessels are capitalized and italicized (U.S.S. *Arleigh Burke*); names of specific classes of Navy ships are capitalized but not italicized (Arleigh Burke class destroyer, Wasp class amphibious assault ship). Names of general types of ships are neither capitalized nor italicized (dock landing ship, littoral combat ship).

Every Navy ship has a unique letter-and-number identifier; for example, the U.S.S. *Arleigh Burke* is DDG-51. When a ship is the first (or lead) ship in a class, the class can also be referred to by that ship's identifier: *Beginning in 2016, new DDG-51s will have an upgraded design.*

**short circuit** (n.), **short-circuit** (v.)

**short run, short term.** Not hyphenated after a noun: *an effect in the short run.* Hyphenated before a noun: *a short-term effect.*

**short-term interest rate.** The interest rate earned by a debt instrument (such as a Treasury bill) that will mature within one year.

**shutdown** (n. and adj.), **shut down** (v.)

**simple words and phrases.** See the box about **Plain English** on page 53.

**since.** See **because/since/as.**

**sine qua non.** Means “something absolutely essential.” Not italicized. Also see the box about **Foreign Phrases and Abbreviations** on page 27.

**single-payer system**

**sizable** (not “sizeable”)

**S.J. Res.** Stands for *Senate joint resolution*. No need to spell it out when used with a number: *S.J. Res. 43.*

**skilled nursing facility (SNF)**

## Small Business Administration (SBA)

**Social Security.** A federal program for retired workers, people with disabilities, and their families. Social Security has two parts: Old-Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI) and Disability Insurance (DI). The program is sometimes referred to as Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI). Capitalize **Social Security** unless referring to general social security programs in other countries: *The social security programs in Chile and Sweden use different rules for eligibility.*

## Social Security Administration (SSA)

### Social Services Block Grant (SSBG)

**program.** Also known as the Title XX Social Services Block Grant program because it was created by title XX of the Social Security Act.

**socio-**. socioeconomic, sociopolitical. See **prefixes**.

### sole community hospital (SCH)

**some.** See **those**.

**south.** Lowercase when referring to a direction or general location: *a south wind, southward, south of the border, southern Montana, southern United States*. Uppercase when referring to a specific geographic or political region: *the South, the Southwest, Southerner, Southern Hemisphere, Southeast Asia, South Sudan, South Pole*. Thus, note the distinction between *South Side* (a section of Chicago) and *south side* (the southern part of something).

**space-**. spacecraft, spaceflight, space shuttle, space station. See **prefixes**.

**spare parts** (not “spares”)

**Speaker of the House, the Speaker.** See **Congressional correspondence and titles of office**.

## Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

**spelling.** Because spelling can vary and may be arbitrary, consult *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* ([www.m-w.com](http://www.m-w.com)). If an entry gives alternative spellings, use the first one unless otherwise indicated in this style guide.

For the names and abbreviations of organizations, CBO generally follows the style that an organization uses for its name in print—*Federal Home Loan Banks (FHLBanks)*, *PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC)*—unless that style is so strange that no other publications use it.

Troublesome words, especially hyphenated and compound words, are listed separately and alphabetically in this style guide. Words formed with prefixes or suffixes are found under separate alphabetical listings for the prefix or suffix. For general guidelines about various aspects of spelling and word formation, see the boxes about **Hyphenation and Compound Words** on page 33 and **Possessives** on page 54.

**spending/funding.** In the context of the federal government, **spending** generally refers to cash flows recorded for disbursement from the Treasury; it is synonymous with *outlays* or *expenditures*. **Funding** refers to the authority to enter into obligations on behalf of the government that result in spending; it is synonymous with *budget authority* or (for discretionary programs) *appropriations*.

Budget laws, and thus CBO, sometimes use **spending** in a broader sense to encompass both budget authority and outlays. That broader usage generally occurs in references to *mandatory spending, direct spending, or discretionary spending* as general categories or in specific budgetary terms such as *discretionary spending caps*. When a CBO document is referring specifically to amounts appropriated, however, *discretionary appropriations* or *discretionary funding* is preferable to “discretionary spending.”

**split infinitive.** A split infinitive occurs when one or more adverbs come between “to” and a verb. Avoiding split infinitives is fairly easy. Instead of writing “The next step is to slowly and carefully lift the weight,” write *The next step is slowly and carefully to lift the weight* or *The next step is to lift the weight slowly and carefully*. Split infinitives are permissible, however, when moving an adverb elsewhere in a sentence would sound awkward or would make it unclear which verb the adverb was modifying. *The President declined to flatly rule out invading North Korea.*

**spring.** The season is lowercase even when used with a year: *spring 2011*.

**S. Res.** Stands for *Senate resolution*. No need to spell it out when used with a number: *S. Res 57*.

**staff-model health maintenance organization**

**Standard & Poor’s (S&P)**

**state.** Lowercase when referring geographically to a particular state (*the state of Washington*) or to an unnamed state in the United States or another country, whether as a noun or an adjective (*four states are involved* or *delegated to the state level*). **State** is uppercase when it is part of a title (*the Seal of the State of Illinois*), when it follows a state’s name (*Washington State*), or when it refers to a state government (*the State of California plans to draft new regulations* or *employees of the State of Michigan*, but *state employees*). The same rules apply to **city**, **commonwealth**, **county**, **town**, and so forth.

When referring to a city and state, use the state’s full name: *The demonstration took place in Fall River, Massachusetts*. If a city is well known, however, the state can be omitted: *The association held its annual meeting in Chicago*. When only the state is mentioned, spell it out as well: *The New England states include Vermont, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts*.

When a state’s name must be abbreviated, as in a crowded table, use the standard abbreviation

(*Mass., Pa., Nev.*). Use the two-letter abbreviation (*MA, PA, NV*) only when an address and zip code are given.

**State Children’s Health Insurance Program.**

Now called the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

**State of the Union address**

**stationary-source emissions**

**Statutes at Large.** The *United States Statutes at Large* is a chronological compilation of the laws enacted during each session of Congress. Citations to it take this form: *88 Stat. 297, 302*, in which the first number is the volume, the second number is the first page of the law, and the last number is the first page of the provision being cited. For information about when to cite *Statutes at Large*, see the part of the **Footnotes and References** section that begins on page 90.

**Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, statutory PAYGO procedures**

**statutory tax rate.** A tax rate specified by law. In some cases, such as with individual and corporate income taxes, the statutory tax rate varies with the amount of taxable income. In other cases, such as with the federal excise tax on gasoline, the statutory tax rate is uniform. Compare with **effective tax rate** and **marginal tax rate**.

**steady state.** Not hyphenated after a noun: *The economy is in a steady state*. Hyphenated before a noun: *steady-state costs*.

**stealth.** Lowercase when referring to design characteristics that help an object, such as an aircraft, avoid detection by radar: *stealth bomber, stealth fighter*. Also refer to such aircraft by their numerical designation (*B-2, F-22*) to prevent confusion.

**straight-** straightaway (n. and adv.), straightforward (adj.), straight-line (adj.). See **prefixes**.

**Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT), the second Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT II)**

**Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), the second Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START II), the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START)**

**Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR)**

**student loans.** See **William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program.**

**sub-**. subcategory, subcommittee, subcontractor, subheading, subnormal, subzero, but sub-Saharan. See **prefixes.**

**subchapter.** Lowercase when referring to part of a piece of legislation or a legal code: *subchapter S of chapter 1 of the tax code*. The exception is a *Subchapter S corporation*.

**Subcommittee.** Uppercase when part of a formal name (*the Subcommittee on Agriculture of the House Committee on Appropriations*) or in testimony when referring to the subcommittee holding the hearing (*I wish to thank the Subcommittee for inviting me*). Lowercase when used informally (*The agriculture appropriations subcommittee agreed to take up the proposal*).

**subjunctive.** Although the subjunctive mood is becoming less common, in formal writing it is still used to express the following ideas:

- **Demands**—*The law requires that new spending be (not “is” or “will be”) offset by cuts elsewhere.*
- **Requests**—*We ask that he proceed (not “proceeds”) here immediately.*
- **Conditions contrary to fact**—*I wouldn’t go there if I were (not “was”) you. If she were the Queen of England, she could spend all of her time at the beach.*

- **Wishes** (which are, by definition, contrary to fact)—*I wish I were home now.*

Traditionally, the subjunctive was also used in conditional sentences that expressed uncertain or hypothetical situations, but modern grammarians concur that this usage is becoming extinct. One reason is that an “if” clause is usually enough to convey some uncertainty without the addition of the subjunctive: *If the funding for subsidies is insufficient, the government can reduce the size of the subsidy.*

The real value of the subjunctive today lies in distinguishing between factual conditions and those contrary to fact and giving extra punch to the latter: *If this jury were to sit for the next six years, it still would not reach a decision.*

**submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM)**

**subsequent to.** A stilted phrase; use *after* instead.

**substance abuse.** Not hyphenated as an adjective: *substance abuse treatment.*

**suffixes.** To determine whether a suffix forms a hyphenated, a closed, or an open compound, refer to the entries for specific suffixes in this style guide or to *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* ([www.m-w.com](http://www.m-w.com)), not online spell-check programs. Most words formed with suffixes are not hyphenated. Exceptions include compounds formed with a number (*23-fold*); with *-elect*, *-free*, or *-on*, which are usually hyphenated; or with *-off* or *-up*, which are about equally likely to be hyphenated or not hyphenated.

If a hyphenated word with a suffix appears in a heading or title, the suffix should not be capitalized.

**summer.** Lowercase even when used with a year: *summer 2011.*

**sunset provision.** A provision in law that is due to expire on a specified date—the sunset date. “Sunset” is not a verb and should not be used as one; say *expire* or *end* instead.

**super-** superabundant, supercarrier, supercomputer, superhighway, supersede (not “supercede”), supertanker. See **prefixes**.

**Superfund** (no article). Familiar name of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980, which established a trust fund for cleaning up hazardous waste sites.

**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).** Formerly the Food Stamp program.

**Supplemental Security Income (SSI)**

**Supplementary Medical Insurance (SMI)**

**Trust Fund, the SMI trust fund.** The fund used for Parts B and D of the Medicare program (Medical Insurance and prescription drug coverage, respectively).

**supply-side** (adj.)

**supra-** supragovernmental, supranational. See **prefixes**.

**Supreme Court.** See **courts**.

**surface-to-air missile (SAM)**

**surplus.** See **budget surplus**.

**sustainable growth rate (SGR).** The formula that determines updates to payment rates for physicians under the Medicare program.

**symposium, symposiums** (pl.)

**table.** Uppercase when referring to a specific table in a document: *see Table 12*. Lowercase when referring to tables nonspecifically or when there is only one: *Numbers in the text and tables of this report may not add up to totals because of rounding or see the table below* (usually used in a text box).

**take-home pay**

**take-up** (n. and adj.), **take up** (v.)

**tanks.** Use Arabic numerals in designations: *M1, M1A1, T-84*.

**TARP.** See **Troubled Asset Relief Program**.

**tax-.** The terms *tax-deductible*, *tax-deferred*, *tax-exempt*, *tax-free*, and *tax-sheltered* are always hyphenated: *a tax-exempt loan, the gift will be tax-deductible*.

**taxpayer**

**Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)**

**that/which.** The distinction between these two words is subtle but important. In correct U.S. usage (British usage is different), **that** introduces a restrictive clause and **which** introduces a nonrestrictive one. In other words, **that** introduces information that is essential in a sentence; **which** introduces information that could be removed without changing the sentence's meaning. *The Senator is visiting the new shipyard that builds submarines* implies that there are several new shipyards and the **that** clause is needed to identify which one. *The Senator is visiting the new shipyard, which builds submarines* implies that there is only one new shipyard and the information in the **which** clause is incidental.

A simple rule of thumb: As relative pronouns, **which** requires a comma in front of it; **that** does not.

**the.** In text, do not capitalize **the** as part of the name of an organization or periodical (such as a newspaper or journal): *the World Bank, the Urban Institute, the New York Times, the Journal of Taxation*. Make an exception only when **the** is an integral part of the name: *The Emergency Food Assistance Program* (abbreviated TEFAP). In footnote citations, omit **the** for organizations, publishers, and periodicals.

**then.** Used to designate a person's or thing's former status: *then President Harry Truman, then Secretary Rumsfeld*, but *then-operating provisions, then-current laws*.

**therefore.** At the beginning of a sentence, **therefore** is followed by a comma. When incorporated within a sentence, **therefore** may or may not need to be set off by commas. The test is whether, if the reader was reading the text aloud, he or she would pause for emphasis at **therefore**: *It therefore behooves us to act. It behooves us, therefore, to act.*

The same rules apply to *thus, of course, and in turn*.

**there is, there are.** See **it is, there is, there are**.

**these.** See **this/that**.

**thesis, theses** (pl.)

**third world.** A pejorative term that has become irrelevant given the disintegration of the second world (the former East bloc). Use *developing countries* instead.

**this/that.** **This** and **that** are used primarily to distinguish between something present (in space or in thought) and something at a distance, as in *When the committee finishes marking up this bill, it will tackle that one*.

Strictly speaking, when the words are used individually, **this** refers to something that is about

to be mentioned. *This is the problem: Funding will run out in just two weeks.* **That** refers to something that has already been mentioned. *Funding is due to run out soon; when that happens, the program will end.* **This**, therefore, should not be used to refer back to an idea expressed in a previous sentence. *Raising the saving rate can boost GDP and lower the deficit. That (not “this”) is a good idea.*

The same rule applies to *these* and *those*.

**those.** When used as a pronoun, **those** needs something to refer back to. A phrase such as “those without health insurance” can leave the reader guessing. (Those what? People under age 65? Employees of small businesses? U.S. residents in general?) If the previous sentence contains a plural noun, the reader may wrongly assume **those** refers to it. Even when **those** is meant to be general, replace it with a general noun that will not make the reader guess: *people without health insurance.*

The same argument applies to *some*. When the antecedent is not clear, *some* should be followed by a noun: *some critics, some economists, some people.*

**though.** See **although/though** and **however**.

**thrift institutions.** Savings and loan institutions and mutual savings banks.

**Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)**

**thus.** See **therefore**.

**Tier I benefits.** Part of the Railroad Retirement program.

**time-**. time-consuming (adj.), time frame, timekeeping, time line, time-out, time series (n.), time-series (adj.), time sheet, timetable, time zone. See **prefixes**.

**TIPS.** See **Treasury**.

**title.** Lowercase when referring to part of a piece of legislation or a legal code: *title 212 of the law*. Uppercase when referring to a program: *Title I grants*.

**titles of office.** In general, titles are lowercase unless they are used immediately before a person’s name: *Governor Patrick, the governor of Massachusetts*. Some titles of federal offices, however, are always uppercase at CBO: *Administrator, Chairman* (of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, of a Congressional committee), *Congressman, Congresswoman, Director, Majority Leader, Member* (of Congress), *Minority Leader, President, Ranking Member* (of a Congressional committee), *Representative, Secretary* (of a department), *Senator, Speaker* (of the House of Representatives), *Vice President*. Those titles are lowercase when they refer to nonfederal offices: *Jim Brown, the state senator*.

**ton-mile**

**total, totaled, totaling**

**total factor productivity (TFP).** See **productivity**.

**toward** (not “towards”)

**town.** See **state**.

**trade balance.** See **net exports**.

**trade-off.** Hyphenated as a noun: *the trade-off between increased revenues and efficiency losses*. Two words as a verb: *Participants would be forced to trade off efficiency losses for revenue gains*. In most such cases, however, *trade* is sufficient by itself.

**trade-weighted value of the dollar.** The value of the U.S. dollar relative to the currencies of U.S. trading partners, with the weight of each country’s currency equal to that country’s share of U.S. trade.

**trans-**. transatlantic, transcontinental, transoceanic, transpacific, transship. See **prefixes**.

**transfer payments**. Payments made to a person or organization for which no current or future goods or services are required in return. Federal transfer payments include Social Security and unemployment benefits.

### Transportation Security Administration (TSA)

**travel, traveled, traveling**

**Treasury**. Takes a capital T and a definite article: *the Treasury*. Securities issued by the Treasury have different names depending on their characteristics. A *Treasury bill* has an original maturity of no more than one year; interest on a Treasury bill is the difference between the purchase price and the value paid at redemption. A *Treasury note* is an interest-bearing security with a fixed rate and an original maturity of more than a year but not more than 10 years. A *Treasury bond* is an interest-bearing security with a fixed rate and an original maturity of more than 10 years. A *Treasury inflation-protected security (TIPS)* is a security designed to protect investors from inflation by offering a fixed real rate of interest. The principal of a TIPS is linked to the consumer price index and is thus adjusted to reflect the change in that index; at maturity, the security pays the greater of the original or the adjusted principal. Holders of TIPS receive semiannual interest payments that are based on a fixed rate of interest and the adjusted principal amount.

**tri-**. triangular, tricentennial, trilateral, tristate. See **prefixes**.

**TRICARE**. A health care program for military personnel, military retirees, and their dependents. The program is run by the TRICARE Management Activity, which is part of the Military Health System. TRICARE contains various health care plans, including TRICARE for Life, TRICARE Prime, TRICARE Reserve Select, and TRICARE Standard.

**trickle-down theory**

**Trident II missile**

**triple-A rating, triple-A-rated bond**.

Triple-A ratings are designated Aaa or AAA depending on the rating agency.

**Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP)**.

A program established by the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 that permits the Secretary of the Treasury to purchase or insure troubled financial assets. The program's activities have included the purchase of preferred stock from financial institutions, support for automakers and related businesses, a program to avert housing foreclosures, and partnerships with the private sector.

**trust fund**. Uppercase when part of a formal title: *Hospital Insurance Trust Fund, Disability Insurance Trust Fund*. Lowercase in informal references (*the provisions of the trust fund*) and when used with an abbreviation (*HI trust fund, DI trust fund*). Not hyphenated as an adjective: *trust fund revenues*.

In the federal accounting structure, an account designated by law as a trust fund records the revenues, offsetting receipts, or offsetting collections earmarked for the purpose of the fund, as well as budget authority and outlays of the fund that are financed by those revenues or receipts.

# U

**ultra-**. ultrahigh, ultranationalistic, ultrasonic, ultrasound, ultraviolet. See **prefixes**.

**un-**. unaffected, unbiased, undo, unnecessary, unself-conscious, unused, but un-American. See **prefixes**.

**under-**. undercapitalized, underconsumption, underdeveloped, underdog, underestimate, underfunded, undergraduate, underground, underlying, underwrite, but under secretary (as a title), under way (see below). See **prefixes**.

**under/less than**. See **less than/under**.

**under way/underway**. Two words after a noun (*the project is under way*); one word before a noun (*underway replenishment ship, underway refueling*).

**unemployment insurance, unemployment compensation, unemployment benefits**. Those terms may be used interchangeably when discussing the Federal-State Unemployment Insurance Program. They should always be lowercase.

**unemployment rate**. A measure of the number of jobless people who are available for work and are actively seeking jobs, expressed as a percentage of the labor force. See **natural rate of unemployment**.

**Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (UMRA)**

**uni-**. unidimensional, unilateral. See **prefixes**.

**Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU)**

**United Kingdom (U.K.)**. Comprises Great Britain (England, Scotland, Wales) and Northern Ireland. Use only in contexts that clearly include Northern Ireland (for example,

membership in the United Nations or the European Union); otherwise, use *Great Britain* or *Britain*.

In references to people from or cities in England, Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland, cite the specific entity: *Cambridge, England; a young Scotsman; three Welsh playwrights*.

**United Nations**. Use the full name as a noun (*the United Nations met*); use the abbreviation U.N. as an adjective (*a U.N. committee, the U.N. Charter*). The possessive is *United Nations'*.

**United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)**

**United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**

**United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)**

**United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**

**United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**

**United States**. Use the full name as a noun (*cars manufactured in the United States*); use the abbreviation U.S. as an adjective (*U.S. troops*). The possessive is *United States'*.

**units of measure**. In general, spell out units of measure. But when a unit is long or complicated or appears repeatedly, use the full name with the abbreviation in parentheses according to the rules for abbreviations: *miles per gallon (mpg), hundredweight (cwt), barrels per day (bbl/day), kilowatt-hour (kWh)*. Always use numerals with units of measure: *2 kilograms, 12 kg*. Compounds that consist of a numeral and a unit of measure are hyphenated unless the unit is abbreviated: *100-kilohertz chips, an 856 kHz signal*.

**unobligated balances.** The portion of budget authority that has not yet been obligated. Depending on the original terms of the budget authority, unobligated balances either expire at the end of the current fiscal year or are carried forward to future years.

**up-** upcoming, update, upgrade, upload, upswing, uptick, upturn, but up close (adv. or adj.), up front (adv.), up-front (adj.). See **prefixes**.

**-up.** As nouns or adjectives, backup, breakup, buildup, call-up, checkup, cleanup, close-up, cover-up, crack-up, follow-up, grown-up, holdup, letup, lineup, makeup, markup, mix-up, mock-up, mop-up, pent-up, pickup, pileup, push-up, roundup, runner-up, run-up, setup, shake-up, sign-up, speedup, start-up, tie-up, walk-up, windup. (As verbs, those compounds are all two separate words.) See **suffixes**.

**upon.** In general, *on*, which is simpler and means the same thing, is preferable: *The poverty level depends on family size.* See the box about **Plain English** on page 53.

**upward** (not “upwards”)

**U.S. Code (U.S.C.).** The *United States Code* is the official code of federal laws. Citations to it take this form: *31 U.S.C. §1301*, in which the first number is the title and the second number is the section. For information about when to cite the U.S. Code, see the part of the **Footnotes and References** section that begins on page 90.

**user fee.** Money that the federal government charges for services, or for the sale or use of federal goods or resources, that generally provide benefits to the recipients beyond those that may accrue to the general public. In the federal budget, user fees can be classified as offsetting collections, offsetting receipts, or revenues.

**utilize, utilization.** A better choice is *use*, which is shorter, easier to read, and usually means the same thing. See the box about **Plain English** on page 53.

# V

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**value-added tax (VAT)**

**variable rate mortgage**

**versus.** Spell out, but do not italicize, in text and titles. (In titles, **versus** should be capitalized.) Use the abbreviation *v.* only when citing court cases. Also see **court cases** and the box about **Foreign Phrases and Abbreviations** on page 27.

**very.** Compound words that are hyphenated as adjectives (*a well-known man*) lose their hyphens when modified by **very** or similar words (*a very low income family, a rather well known man*). In many cases, rewriting the phrase is preferable (*a family with very low income*).

**Veterans Administration.** See **Department of Veterans Affairs**.

**veterans' compensation.** Not an official program name; it refers to a series of programs run by the Compensation and Pension Service in VA's Veterans Benefits Administration.

**Vice President.** See **titles of office**.

**Vietnam War**

**vis-à-vis.** See the box about **Foreign Phrases and Abbreviations** on page 27.

**vitamin C**

**volatile organic compounds (VOCs)**

**voluntary separation incentive (VSI) payments**

# W

**wage earner**

**wage-replacement benefits**

**wartime**

**wastewater treatment**

**we.** See the box about **Pronouns** on page 57.

**weapon.** Singular as an adjective modifying “system”: *the design of this weapon system*. Plural as an adjective in most other uses: *weapons inventory, weapons production*.

**web page, website, the web**

**weeklong**

**well-being.** Always hyphenated.

**well off.** Not hyphenated after a noun: *taxpayers who are well off*. Hyphenated before a noun: *well-off families*.

**west.** Lowercase when referring to a direction or general location: *a west wind, westward, western Thailand, northwestern United States*. Uppercase when referring to a specific geographic or political region: *the West, Western culture, Westerner, Western Hemisphere, the West Side*. Thus, note the distinctions between *western Europe* (the countries on the western side of Europe) and *Western Europe* (the Cold War political entity) and between *west coast* (the shoreline) and *West Coast* (the region).

**where.** In formal writing, **where** should apply only to places (*the factories where the layoffs will occur*), not to circumstances (*companies may face situations in which [not “where”] layoffs are unavoidable*).

**whether.** See **if/whether**.

**whether or not.** **Whether** implies “or not,” so in most cases saying “whether or not” is redundant. *Let me know whether you can go to the movies*. Adding “or not” is necessary, however, when **whether** introduces a noun clause that acts as an adverb: *Whether or not you agree with my decision, you must go along with it*. Also see **if/whether**.

**which.** See **that/which**.

**while.** Means “happening at the same time” or “as long as”: *I will stay here while you go to the store*. **While** is not a good choice for making a contrast or contradiction. In those cases, use *but, and, although, or whereas*. Instead of writing “Spending has increased only slightly, while the deficit continues to soar,” write *Spending has increased only slightly, but the deficit continues to soar* or *Although spending has increased only slightly, the deficit continues to soar* or, for a sharper contrast, *Spending has increased only slightly, whereas the deficit continues to soar*.

**white.** Lowercase as a racial designation.

**white-collar.** Always hyphenated.

**who/whom.** **Who** is a subject (*Who will attend the party?*) and **whom** is an object (*You spoke to whom?*). In complicated sentences, the best way to determine which word is needed is to recast the sentence in your mind substituting *he/him* for *who/whom*. If *him* is called for, **whom** is correct (easy to remember because they both end in **m**). For example: *the Senator who spoke last week (he spoke last week); the Senator whom we saw last week (we saw him last week)*.

**whose.** Refers both to people and to inanimate objects: *the hockey player whose team is in the play-offs, the stadium whose locker room needs some renovations*.

**WIC.** The standard abbreviation for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

**wide-**. wide-angle, wide-open, wide-ranging, but widespread. See **prefixes**.

**-wide.** agencywide, citywide, economywide, governmentwide, industrywide, nationwide, statewide, worldwide. See **suffixes**.

**will/would.** In the present tense, **would** is the conditional form of the verb **will**. In CBO documents, discuss the effects of bills, proposals, or options that are not law using the conditional **would** (and related verb forms **could** and **might**). *The bill would preserve services through January 1, 2017, but could limit them afterward.*

A common error is to mix conditional and indicative verbs improperly. When using **would**, make sure that other verbs in the sentence (especially verbs in an “if” clause) are in the past tense to maintain the correct sequence of tenses: *By CBO’s estimate, if current policy did not change, spending would total \$47 billion in 2015 and might increase thereafter.* Likewise, when using **will**, put other verbs in the present tense to match: *If current policy does not change, spending will total \$47 billion in 2015 and may increase thereafter.*

Also see **may/might**.

**William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program (FDLP).** Can be referred to informally thereafter as the *direct loan program*. This program comprises direct subsidized loans,

direct unsubsidized loans, direct PLUS loans (originally Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students), and direct consolidation loans. Use the program’s name only when referring to all of the above, not just one part.

**winter.** Lowercase even when used with a year: *winter 2011.*

**work-**. workday, workforce, workload, workout, workplace, workstation, workweek, but work-study. See **prefixes**.

**workers’ compensation.** Not an official program name; it refers to four programs run by the Department of Labor’s Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs.

**workforce.** See **labor force**.

**World Bank.** In text, lowercase “the” before World Bank; in footnote citations, omit it. Also see **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development**.

**World Trade Organization (WTO)**

**World War II, the Second World War, the war, the two world wars**

**worse off.** Not hyphenated after a noun: *The family is worse off than before.* Hyphenated before a noun: *worse-off families.*

**would.** See **will/would**.

**wraparound benefits**

**write-off** (n.), **write off** (v.)

# X-Z

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**Xerox.** A trademark, not a verb. Use *photocopy*.

**X-ray.** Use as a noun, verb, and adjective. Do not capitalize the **r** in headings or titles.

**year-** year-end, year-round, but yearlong. See **prefixes**.

**yield.** The average annual rate of return promised on an investment. For a fixed-income security, such as a bond, the yield is determined by several factors, such as the security's interest rate, face value, purchase price, and assumed holding period. The *yield to maturity* is the effective interest rate earned on a fixed-income security if it is held until the date on which it comes due for payment.

**yield curve.** The relationship formed by plotting the yields of otherwise comparable fixed-income securities (such as Treasury securities) against their terms to maturity. Typically, yields increase as maturities lengthen, and the rate of increase determines the "steepness" or "flatness" of the yield curve.

**zero, zeros.** Write the word out in text. In tables, use a single 0, not 0.0 or 0.00. (If a number rounds to zero, use an asterisk instead and add a note to the table such as \* = *between zero and 0.5 percent*.) Likewise, never use -0 or 0 percent. Place a zero before the decimal point for quantities less than one (*0.05 percent*) unless the quantity is always less than one ( $p < .05$ , *a probability of .05*).

**zero-based budgeting**

**zero-coupon bond**

**zero rate (n.), zero-rate (v.), zero-rating, zero-rated goods**



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## Footnotes and References

Footnotes serve two main purposes: to cite an authority or to expand an explanation. Any direct quotation should have a footnote citing the source of the quotation, as should any mention of a specific study or any controversial assertion made by another author. Statements of fact—such as the years that encompass the baby boom or total outlays for Social Security in 2011—need not be footnoted, unless they are likely to surprise the reader because the truth is contrary to common belief. In general, footnotes are distractions to a busy reader, so they should be kept to a minimum.

Footnotes that provide explanatory or supplementary information, in particular, should be brief and few in number. When considering whether to include an explanatory footnote, think about whether the footnote answers a question that most readers are likely to have. If so, include that information in the text. If, however, the explanation is likely to interest only a few readers but is important technical information about the Congressional Budget Office's (CBO's) analysis, an explanatory footnote is appropriate. Other uses of explanatory footnotes should be limited.

In text, footnotes appear at the bottom of the page on which they are cited. They are numbered consecutively throughout the main text of a document. If a report has a stand-alone summary and is divided into chapters, footnotes begin anew in the summary and each chapter. A new set of footnotes also begins in each box and appendix. In figures and tables, footnotes are indicated with lowercase letters rather than numbers, and they appear below the figure or table source and any other notes.

In rare cases in which having a large number of footnotes is unavoidable, it may be preferable to put them at the end of a document as endnotes. If a report discusses many other studies, a system of author-and-date citations in the text (with an alphabetical list of citations at the end of the report) may be preferable. In either case, consult the Managing Editor before submitting the manuscript.

A footnote number should appear at the end of a sentence, not in the middle, and should follow the closing punctuation (including a closing parenthesis). Do not use more than one footnote number per sentence; instead, combine multiple notes into a single footnote. Very long footnotes may be divided into paragraphs, if necessary.

Footnote references should be accurate and complete enough for a reader to find the source without difficulty. Responsibility for the accuracy and completeness of references rests with authors. Responsibility for the technical aspects of reference style is shared by authors and editors.

CBO's style for footnote references differs from some styles used elsewhere. General guidelines for CBO's reference style are outlined below; specific examples begin on page 81.

## What to Put in References

When a source is mentioned, give the full reference, according to the rules explained below. In most cases, CBO no longer uses shortened references when a source is cited more than once in a report or a chapter; such references are not helpful to readers, who must backtrack to find the original, complete reference. (An exception may be made if a source is cited repeatedly throughout a document or several times in a short span of pages.)

If a footnote contains multiple references, separate them with semicolons and put “and” before the last one. List the references in reverse chronological order, unless some other arrangement is more appropriate in a particular footnote. If several references in a footnote have the same author or set of authors, include the authors only once and separate those references with commas rather than semicolons. All footnotes end with a period.

A reference generally contains the following parts:

- **Author.** Give the author's first and last names (in that order) as they appear on the title page, including any middle initials shown. If a publication's style is to use an initial in place of an author's first name, substitute the full first name, if it can be found easily. Do not include an author's title, degree, or affiliation (except when citing testimony or personal communications, as shown in the examples). For an edited work, put a comma and the abbreviation “ed.” (or the plural “eds.”) after the editor's name. List multiple authors in the order shown on the title page. If a work has more than three authors, give the first author's name followed by “and others” (not “et al.”) with no intervening punctuation.

If the cover or title page lists an organization or agency rather than a person as an author—as is the case with CBO publications—treat the organization as the author. For a government agency or office, it is not necessary to include the name of the department first, unless the agency or office could be confused with other government entities that have similar names. (For example, the Energy Information Administration or the Bureau of Labor Statistics would not require further identification, but an Office of Policy Development and Research would need a department name first for clarity.)

- **Title.** Give the complete title (and any subtitle) of a book or report as shown on the title page, if there is one, rather than on the cover. (Note that subtitles may appear on the title page in a different font or type size than the main title. In the reference, the subtitle should follow the main title after a colon or em dash.) Titles of books, reports, testimonies, journals, and blogs should be in italics; titles of journal articles, book chapters, web pages, and most other sources should be in roman type with quotation marks. Capitalization and punctuation of a title may be edited to conform to CBO style, but spelling may not.
- **Additional Information.** After the title, list any other useful information from the cover or title page of a report, such as a publication number, a volume number in a series, the name of the series, or an edition number. For journal articles, cite the volume and issue numbers before the publication date. (Newspapers and magazines are identified by date only, not by volume and issue.)
- **Publisher.** For books and reports from nongovernment sources, include the company or organization that published the work. (For federal government publications, it is not necessary to cite the Government Printing Office as the publisher.) CBO no longer requires the publisher's location to be included in references to books and reports. However, for works that are not for general public distribution (draft reports, dissertations, letters) or that are essentially oral in nature, even if written copies exist (briefings, personal communications, presentations at conferences), include the place of presentation or the author's location in parentheses after the title. Omit "the" before the name of a publisher or organization and "Inc.," "Co.," "Ltd.," or "S.A." after the name. If an organization is both the author and the publisher, its name can be abbreviated as the publisher.
- **Date of Publication.** For published works, list the publication date as it appears on the title page or copyright page; put the date in parentheses. If publication is imminent, use "forthcoming." Before citing a CBO publication as forthcoming, however, check with the editors. The term should mean "within the next few weeks." Otherwise, refer in general terms to "a future CBO publication" and do not include the title, which could change during the review and editing process. For unpublished works, the date of publication should be the date of completion (as with an unpublished dissertation) or the date of presentation (as with a conference paper). For web pages, use the date posted on the page; if none is shown, include the date on which the author looked at the page (with "accessed").
- **Page Numbers.** When citing the source of a quotation or specific piece of information, include the appropriate page number (or table or figure number) in the reference. When referring generally to an article in a journal or a chapter or essay in a book, include the complete range of pages for the article or chapter. Page numbers

appear after the publication date, preceded by a comma and the abbreviation “p.” or “pp.” (plural). When citing a range of pages, give the first and last page numbers in full, separated by an en dash: 223–229, not 223–9. Do not use a comma for page numbers in thousands: 1123–1268.

- **Web Address.** Whenever possible, include a web address at the end of a reference for a publication that exists online as well as, or instead of, in print (such as a book, report, journal article, or CBO document). For journal articles, use a digital object identifier (DOI), if one is available. For other sources, use a uniform resource locator (URL).

Ideally, the web address should go to a summary page that gives readers a choice of formats or access to supplemental information—for example, [www.cbo.gov/publication/43428](http://www.cbo.gov/publication/43428) instead of [www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/attachments/07-11-12-FYDP\\_forPosting\\_0.pdf](http://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/attachments/07-11-12-FYDP_forPosting_0.pdf) and [www.eia.gov/forecasts/aeo/index.cfm](http://www.eia.gov/forecasts/aeo/index.cfm) instead of [www.eia.gov/forecasts/aeo/pdf/0383%282012%29.pdf](http://www.eia.gov/forecasts/aeo/pdf/0383%282012%29.pdf). When the only available link for a source goes to a PDF, include the file size in parentheses after the URL so readers do not inadvertently open a long document that could tie up their computer or be difficult to read on certain devices. For brevity, delete “http://” from the beginning of any web address that also includes “www.” If an address is long or contains many symbols and punctuation marks, the editors may convert it to a shorter one by using a redirect service.

For books, a URL should point to the publisher’s page for the book rather than to an outside retailer, such as Amazon.com. For online documents that are available only by paid subscription (such as some journal articles or data tables), include a DOI or URL for a summary page that describes the document and is accessible to nonsubscribers, if possible (for example, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-5890.2002.tb00053.x>). For online documents that are not readily available to the public (such as reports by the Congressional Research Service), do not include a web address.

Because URLs often change, a reference should never consist solely of a web address. When citing a web page, include the author’s or organization’s name, the name of the page (in quotation marks), and the date posted on the page (or, if there is none, the “accessed” date) as well as the URL. That additional information may help readers locate the page if the URL changes later.

Authors are responsible for providing accurate and complete links to their sources and for keeping abreast of any updates to those sources. Reviewers and editors should not add web addresses to references without checking with the author to make sure that the address points to the same version of a source that the author consulted.

## Examples of References

The following examples cover the types of sources most commonly cited in footnotes at CBO: the agency's own publications, books and reports by government and nongovernment authors, articles in journals and newsletters, federal legislation, websites, and a variety of unpublished material. If a particular source does not fall into any of the categories below, consult the editors.

These examples show how references should look when a document is submitted for review or editing. In some cases, references may look different in their final published form. (For example, an editor might use a redirect service to shorten a long or unwieldy web address.)

### CBO Publications

Most CBO documents are attributed to the organization rather than to individual authors. Exceptions are testimony, presentations, and working papers (as well as their predecessors, technical papers). Publication dates (either month-year or month-day-year) should follow the style shown on the cover or first page of the document.

Authors should include a URL in a reference to a CBO document just as they do for other sources. Whenever possible, the URL should point to the summary page for the document rather than to the document itself.

Before February 2012, some CBO publications were designated on their covers or title pages as studies, reports, issue briefs, or background papers. Those separate categories are no longer maintained, and references to older CBO publications of those types should not include such designations.

### Report

This category consists of CBO publications not listed separately below (including mandated reports; chart books; and documents formerly labeled studies, papers, memorandums, or issue briefs).

Congressional Budget Office, *Energy Security in the United States* (May 2012), p. 21, [www.cbo.gov/publication/43012](http://www.cbo.gov/publication/43012).

Congressional Budget Office, *A Review of CBO's Activities in 2010 Under the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act* (March 2011), Table 1, [www.cbo.gov/publication/22075](http://www.cbo.gov/publication/22075).

### Cost Estimate

Congressional Budget Office, cost estimate for S. 2389, a bill to deem the submission of certain claims to an Indian Health Service contracting officer as timely (August 6, 2012), [www.cbo.gov/publication/43519](http://www.cbo.gov/publication/43519).

Congressional Budget Office, cost estimate for S. 3001, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (June 13, 2008), [www.cbo.gov/publication/19886](http://www.cbo.gov/publication/19886).

**Testimony**

Testimony of Douglas W. Elmendorf, Director, Congressional Budget Office, before the Subcommittee on Legislative Branch of the Senate Committee on Appropriations, *CBO's Appropriation Request for Fiscal Year 2013* (March 15, 2012), [www.cbo.gov/publication/43081](http://www.cbo.gov/publication/43081).

**Letter**

CBO publications that take the form of a letter (or, in the case of some older documents, an attachment to a letter) are cited as follows. In the first style, the description of the letter's subject should mirror as closely as possible the wording on CBO's website. The second style is used when a letter attachment is posted on CBO's website with the letter at the beginning of the PDF. (If the letter is not included in the PDF, cite the document as a regular CBO report.)

**Letter only:** Congressional Budget Office, letter to the Honorable John Boehner providing an estimate for H.R. 6079, the Repeal of Obamacare Act (July 24, 2012), [www.cbo.gov/publication/43471](http://www.cbo.gov/publication/43471).

**Letter with attached, titled document:** Congressional Budget Office, *Analysis of Federal Civilian and Military Compensation* (attachment to a letter to the Honorable Steny H. Hoyer, January 20, 2011), [www.cbo.gov/publication/22002](http://www.cbo.gov/publication/22002).

**CBO Blog Entry**

Congressional Budget Office, "Federal Debt and Interest Costs," *CBO Blog* (December 14, 2010), [www.cbo.gov/publication/25127](http://www.cbo.gov/publication/25127).

**Presentation**

Robert A. Sunshine, Deputy Director, Congressional Budget Office, "Economic Growth and Employment in the Short Term" (presentation to the National Lieutenant Governors Association, Washington, D.C., March 17, 2010), [www.cbo.gov/publication/21325](http://www.cbo.gov/publication/21325).

**Infographic**

Congressional Budget Office, "The U.S. Federal Budget" (infographic, December 2011), [www.cbo.gov/publication/42636](http://www.cbo.gov/publication/42636).

**Supplemental Data or Technical Information**

Congressional Budget Office, “Methods for Analysis of the Financing and Use of Long-Term Services and Supports” (supplemental material for *Rising Demand for Long-Term Services and Supports for Elderly People*, June 2013), [www.cbo.gov/publication/44370](http://www.cbo.gov/publication/44370).

**Baseline Table or Other Miscellaneous Document**

Congressional Budget Office, “Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation—May 2013 Baseline” (May 2013), [www.cbo.gov/publication/44210](http://www.cbo.gov/publication/44210).

**Working Paper or Technical Paper**

Tim Dowd, Robert McClelland, and Athiphat Muthitacharoen, *New Evidence on the Tax Elasticity of Capital Gains*, Working Paper 2012-09 (Congressional Budget Office, June 2012, updated August 2012), [www.cbo.gov/publication/43334](http://www.cbo.gov/publication/43334).

Julie Topoleski, *Uncertainty About Projections of Medicare Cost Growth*, Technical Paper 2004-13 (Congressional Budget Office, August 2004), [www.cbo.gov/publication/15942](http://www.cbo.gov/publication/15942).

**Books, Reports, and Working Papers From Nongovernment Sources**

Titles of books and published stand-alone reports (as opposed to articles) appear in italics, followed by the publisher’s name and the publication date in parentheses. Publication dates for books are traditionally the year of copyright; publication dates for reports and working papers should match the date on the cover or title page. Include publication numbers, editions, and web addresses whenever possible (see the guidelines for web addresses on page 80). Reports by government agencies other than CBO follow a slightly different style (see the section on “Government Publications,” which begins on page 87).

**One to Three Authors**

Philip G. Joyce, *The Congressional Budget Office: Honest Numbers, Power, and Policymaking* (Georgetown University Press, 2011), p. 58, <http://press.georgetown.edu/book/georgetown/congressional-budget-office>.

Nisha Mistry and Joan Byron, *The Federal Role in Supporting Urban Manufacturing* (Urban Institute, April 2011), pp. 21–24, [www.urban.org/publications/1001536.html](http://www.urban.org/publications/1001536.html).

Jeanne M. Jarvaise, Jeffrey A. Drezner, and Daniel M. Norton, *The Defense System Cost Performance Database: Cost Growth Analysis Using Selected Acquisition Reports*, MR-625-OSD (RAND Corporation, 1996), [www.rand.org/pubs/monograph\\_reports/MR625.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR625.html).

**More Than Three Authors**

Howard C. Kunreuther and others, *At War With the Weather: Managing Large-Scale Risks in a New Era of Catastrophes* (MIT Press, 2009), pp. 256–261, <http://mitpress.mit.edu/catalog/item/default.asp?type=2&ctid=11795>.

**Editor**

Jonathan H. Adler, ed., *Rebuilding the Ark: New Perspectives on Endangered Species Act Reform* (AEI Press, 2011), [www.aei.org/book/energy-and-the-environment/natural-resources/rebuilding-the-ark/](http://www.aei.org/book/energy-and-the-environment/natural-resources/rebuilding-the-ark/).

Hualou Liang, Joseph D. Bronzino, and Donald R. Peterson, eds., *Biosignal Processing: Principles and Practices* (CRC Press, 2012), [www.crcpress.com/product/isbn/9781439871430](http://www.crcpress.com/product/isbn/9781439871430).

**Organization as Author**

Institute of Medicine, *Ethical and Scientific Issues in Studying the Safety of Approved Drugs* (National Academies Press, 2012), [www.iom.edu/Reports/2012/Ethical-and-Scientific-Issues-in-Studying-the-Safety-of-Approved-Drugs.aspx](http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2012/Ethical-and-Scientific-Issues-in-Studying-the-Safety-of-Approved-Drugs.aspx).

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Greening Household Behaviour: The Role of Public Policy* (OECD, 2011), [www.oecd.org/australia/greening-household-behaviour-2011.htm](http://www.oecd.org/australia/greening-household-behaviour-2011.htm).

**Chapter or Essay in a Book**

**Author different from editor:** Tiffany Shih and Brian Wright, “Agricultural Innovation,” in Rebecca Henderson and Richard G. Newell, eds., *Accelerating Energy Innovation: Insights From Multiple Sectors* (University of Chicago Press, 2011), pp. 49–85, [www.nber.org/books/hend09-1](http://www.nber.org/books/hend09-1).

**Author and editor the same:** Cheng Li, “Chinese Scholarship on the Middle Class: From Social Stratification to Political Potential,” in Li, ed., *China’s Emerging Middle Class: Beyond Economic Transformation* (Brookings Institution Press, 2010), p. 77, [www.brookings.edu/research/books/2010/chinasemergingmiddleclass](http://www.brookings.edu/research/books/2010/chinasemergingmiddleclass).

**Preface, Foreword, or Introduction to a Book**

Harold Meyerson, foreword to Amy B. Dean and David B. Reynolds, *A New New Deal: How Regional Activism Will Reshape the American Labor Movement* (Cornell University Press, 2010), pp. ix–xi, [www.cornellpress.cornell.edu/book/?GCOI=80140100697040](http://www.cornellpress.cornell.edu/book/?GCOI=80140100697040).

**Volume in a Series**

To emphasize volume title: Carol Alexander, *Value-at-Risk Models*, vol. 4 of *Market Risk Analysis* (Wiley, 2009), p. 113, [www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0470997885.html](http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0470997885.html).

To emphasize series title: H. Peter Gray, ed., *Research in International Business and Finance*, vol. 5, *Uncle Sam as Host* (Jai Press, 1986).

**Subsequent Edition**

Steven J. Isakowitz, Joshua B. Hopkins, and Joseph P. Hopkins Jr., *International Reference Guide to Space Launch Systems*, 4th ed. (American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, 2004), [www.aiaa.org/PubDetail.aspx?id=2052](http://www.aiaa.org/PubDetail.aspx?id=2052).

**Working Paper or Other Series**

Robert J. Gordon, *Did Economics Cause World War II?* Working Paper 14560 (National Bureau of Economic Research, December 2008), [www.nber.org/papers/w14560](http://www.nber.org/papers/w14560).

John M. Roberts, *Using Structural Shocks to Identify Models of Investment*, Finance and Economics Discussion Series Paper 2005-69 (Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, October 2005), [www.federalreserve.gov/pubs/feds/2005/200569/200569abs.html](http://www.federalreserve.gov/pubs/feds/2005/200569/200569abs.html).

**Forthcoming Publication**

Sam Harris, *The Moral Landscape: How Science Can Determine Human Values* (Free Press, forthcoming).

**Proceedings Volume**

Raymond Robertson, “Globalization and Mexican Labor Markets,” in James F. Hollifield, Pia M. Orrenius, and Thomas Osang, eds., *Migration, Trade, and Development: Proceedings of the 2006 Conference on Migration, Trade, and Development* (Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, December 2007), [www.dallasfed.org/research/pubs/migration/index.cfm](http://www.dallasfed.org/research/pubs/migration/index.cfm).

Note: For conference papers that are not part of a published proceedings, see the section on “Other Sources,” which begins on page 94.

**Articles in Periodicals**

The examples in this section apply to articles in professional and academic journals, general-interest magazines, newsletters, or newspapers, whether printed or online. For journal articles, include any volume and issue numbers in addition to the journal’s publication date (in parentheses). Volume and issue numbers are not necessary for

magazine, newsletter, and newspaper articles. If an article has no authors listed, cite it by its title. Include the full range of page numbers for an article, if possible, unless citing specific pages.

Include a web address with a DOI number, if one is available (append the number to “<http://dx.doi.org/>”); if not, include a URL to a page on the periodical’s website that contains the full article or that links to it. (If the web address goes to a PDF, include the file size in parentheses at the end.) If the article is available online only by paid subscription, include a web address for a summary page that describes the article and is accessible to nonsubscribers, if possible. (A DOI address will generally point to such a page.)

### ***Journal***

Kenneth A. Couch and Dana W. Placzek, “Earnings Losses of Displaced Workers Revisited,” *American Economic Review*, vol. 100, no. 1 (March 2010), pp. 572–589, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1257/aer.100.1.572>.

Daron Acemoglu and others, “When Does Policy Reform Work? The Case of Central Bank Independence,” *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity* (Spring 2008), p. 355, [www.brookings.edu/about/projects/bpea/past-editions](http://www.brookings.edu/about/projects/bpea/past-editions).

Carrie H. Colla and others, “Spending Differences Associated With the Medicare Physician Group Practice Demonstration,” *Journal of the American Medical Association*, vol. 308, no. 10 (September 2012), pp. 1015–1023, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1001/2012.jama.10812>.

John D. Colombo, “The NCAA, Tax Exemption, and College Athletics,” *University of Illinois Law Review* (forthcoming).

### ***Magazine, Newsletter, or Online News Service***

“American Banks: Where’s the Growth?” *Economist* (April 20, 2011), [www.economist.com/node/18586826](http://www.economist.com/node/18586826).

Dave Ahern, “Allied Nations Interested in Buying THAAD Ballistic Missile Defense Systems,” *Defense Daily* (April 22, 2008), [www.defensedaily.com/publications/dd/2428.html](http://www.defensedaily.com/publications/dd/2428.html).

Peter Behr, “Renewable Energy: States and Regions Block Federal ‘Superhighway’ for Solar and Wind Power,” *ClimateWire* (December 15, 2009), [www.eenews.net/climatewire/2009/12/15/5](http://www.eenews.net/climatewire/2009/12/15/5).

### ***Newspaper***

Ashley Halsey III, “High-Speed Rail Funding Chugs Ahead,” *Washington Post* (May 9, 2011), p. A13.

***Periodical Requiring Additional Information for Identification***

If a periodical has a title similar to that of others (as with Federal Reserve publications) or is likely to be unfamiliar to readers, include the organization that publishes it.

Daniel Carroll, “Consumption Taking Longer to Respond to Downturns in GDP,” *Economic Trends*, Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland (January 2012), pp. 17–19, [www.clevelandfed.org/research/trends/2012/0112/ET\\_jan12.pdf](http://www.clevelandfed.org/research/trends/2012/0112/ET_jan12.pdf) (3 MB).

Felix K. Chang and Jonathan Goldman, “Meddling in the Markets: Foreign Manipulation,” *Parameters*, U.S. Army War College, vol. 38 (Spring 2008), pp. 43–59, [www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/Articles/08spring/chang.pdf](http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/Articles/08spring/chang.pdf) (237 KB).

**Government Publications**

References to government publications follow the guidelines given above for their particular type of publication, except that the publisher’s name is not necessary (unless the author is an individual rather than an agency). If a report has a publication number, include it to help readers trying to locate the document. Also include a URL, if possible. If a publication exists online only as a PDF, include a URL for a web page that has an easily identified link to the publication or include a URL for the PDF with the file size in parentheses afterward.

When citing a federal agency or office that is part of a larger department, include the name of the department only if necessary to distinguish the agency or office from other government entities with similar names. For example, the Energy Information Administration or the Office of Tax Analysis would not need further identification, but an Office of Budget or Office of Policy Development and Research would need a department or agency name first for clarity.

Footnote citations for the *United States Statutes at Large*, the U.S. Code, the *Federal Register*, and the *Code of Federal Regulations* are described in the section on “Legislation, Laws, Regulations, and Court Cases,” which begins on page 90.

***General Government Report***

**Organization as author:** Energy Information Administration, *Federal Financial Interventions and Subsidies in Energy Markets 2007*, SR/CNEAF/2008-01 (April 2008), Chapter 2, pp. 36–38, [www.eia.doe.gov/oiaf/servicerpt/subsidy2](http://www.eia.doe.gov/oiaf/servicerpt/subsidy2).

Department of the Navy, Office of Budget, *Highlights of the Department of the Navy FY 2012 Budget* (February 2011), p. 4-3, [www.finance.hq.navy.mil/FMB/12pres/BOOKS.htm](http://www.finance.hq.navy.mil/FMB/12pres/BOOKS.htm).

Federal Emergency Management Agency, *Insurance, Finance, and Regulation Primer for Terrorism Risk Management in Buildings*, FEMA 429 (December 2003), [www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=1562](http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=1562).

**Person as author:** Janet G. McCubbin, *Optimal Tax Enforcement: A Review of the Literature and Practical Implications*, Working Paper 90 (Office of Tax Analysis, December 2004), [www.treasury.gov/resource-center/tax-policy/Pages/otapaper\\_2000-present.aspx](http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/tax-policy/Pages/otapaper_2000-present.aspx).

Rose M. Kreider and Diana B. Elliott, *America's Families and Living Arrangements: 2007*, Current Population Reports P20-561 (Census Bureau, September 2009), [www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/p20.html](http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/p20.html).

### **Report Prepared by a Contractor**

Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research, *Report to Congress on the Root Causes of the Foreclosure Crisis* (prepared by Abt Associates, January 2010), p. xv, [www.huduser.org/portal/publications/hsgfin/foreclosure\\_09.html](http://www.huduser.org/portal/publications/hsgfin/foreclosure_09.html).

Karen Needels and Annalisa Mastri, *Predesign Study for the Evaluation of Recovery Act Green Jobs, Health Care, and Other High-Growth Competitive Grants* (submitted by Mathematica Policy Research to the Department of Labor, April 6, 2010).

### **Report of a Government Commission**

National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, *The Moment of Truth: Report of the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform* (December 2010), [www.fiscalcommission.gov/news/moment-truth-report-national-commission-fiscal-responsibility-and-reform](http://www.fiscalcommission.gov/news/moment-truth-report-national-commission-fiscal-responsibility-and-reform).

President's Commission on Budget Concepts, *Report of the President's Commission on Budget Concepts* (October 1967), p. 65.

### **Federal Budget and Other OMB Publications**

Office of Management and Budget, *Budget of the U.S. Government, Fiscal Year 2012: Analytical Perspectives* (February 2011), p. 201, [www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collectionGPO.action?collectionCode=BUDGET](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collectionGPO.action?collectionCode=BUDGET).

Office of Management and Budget, *Budget of the U.S. Government, Fiscal Year 2011: Mid-Session Review* (July 2010), p. 25, [www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collectionGPO.action?collectionCode=BUDGET](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collectionGPO.action?collectionCode=BUDGET).

Office of Management and Budget, *Budget of the U.S. Government: Appendix* (various years), “Detailed Budget Estimates by Agency: Department of the Interior.”

Office of Management and Budget, *Preparation, Submission, and Execution of the Budget*, Circular A-11 (August 2012), [www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars\\_index-budget/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_index-budget/).

### ***Economic Report of the President***

Council of Economic Advisers, *Economic Report of the President* (February 2010), pp. 243–246, [www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/cea/economic-report-of-the-President/2010](http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/cea/economic-report-of-the-President/2010).

### ***Government Accountability Office***

Before July 2004, GAO was called the General Accounting Office. If citing a report from that period, use the office’s name at the time of publication, followed by the current name in parentheses. For the publication date, use the date on the cover or first page of the document.

**Report:** Government Accountability Office, *Superfund: Information on the Nature and Costs of Cleanup Activities at Three Landfills in the Gulf Coast Region*, GAO-11-287R (February 18, 2011), [www.gao.gov/products/GAO-11-287R](http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-11-287R).

General Accounting Office (now the Government Accountability Office), *Transportation Security: Federal Action Needed to Help Address Security Challenges*, GAO-03-843 (June 2003), [www.gao.gov/products/GAO-03-843](http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-03-843).

**Testimony:** Testimony of Jim Wells, Director, Natural Resources and Environment, Government Accountability Office, before the Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development of the House Committee on Appropriations, *Advanced Energy Technologies: Key Challenges to Their Development and Deployment*, GAO-07-550T (February 28, 2007), p. 2, [www.gao.gov/products/GAO-07-550T](http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-07-550T).

### ***Congressional Research Service***

Publications of the Congressional Research Service are not generally available to the public, so references to them do not include URLs.

Suzanne M. Kirchoff, *The Construction Sector in the U.S. Economy*, Report for Congress R41806 (Congressional Research Service, May 3, 2011), pp. 2–5.

James V. Saturno, *Amendments in Disagreement*, Report for Congress 98-813 (Congressional Research Service, November 3, 2004).

### **Report by a Congressional Committee or House of Congress**

Joint Committee on Taxation, *Estimated Budget Effects of the Revenue Provisions Contained in the President's Fiscal Year 2012 Budget Proposal*, JCX-19-11 (March 17, 2011), [www.jct.gov/publications.html?func=select&id=50](http://www.jct.gov/publications.html?func=select&id=50).

Senate Committee on the Budget, *Concurrent Resolution on the Budget, FY 2011: Committee Print to Accompany S. Con. Res. 60, Together With Additional Views and Minority Views*, S. Prt. 111-45 (April 2010), [www.gpo.gov/fdsys/granule/CPRT-111SPRT56024/CPRT-111SPRT56024/content-detail.html](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/granule/CPRT-111SPRT56024/CPRT-111SPRT56024/content-detail.html).

U.S. House of Representatives, *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008: Conference Report to Accompany H.R. 1585*, House Report 110-477 (December 6, 2007), pp. 881–882, [www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CRPT-110hrpt477/html/CRPT-110hrpt477.htm](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CRPT-110hrpt477/html/CRPT-110hrpt477.htm).

### **Testimony Before the Congress**

**With testimony title:** Testimony of Melissa M. Favreault, Senior Research Associate, Urban Institute, before the Senate Special Committee on Aging, *Revitalizing Social Security: Effectively Targeting Benefit Enhancements for Low Lifetime Earners and the Oldest Old* (June 17, 2009), <http://aging.senate.gov/events/hr211mf.pdf> (90 KB).

**Without testimony title:** Testimony of Ronald A. Rosenfeld, Chairman, Federal Housing Finance Board, before the Subcommittee on Capital Markets, Insurance, and Government Sponsored Enterprises of the House Committee on Financial Services (March 9, 2005), <http://archives.financialservices.house.gov/media/pdf/030905rr.pdf> (89 KB).

### **Congressional Record**

**Daily digest:** *Congressional Record—Senate* (May 4, 2011), p. D446.

**Complete version:** *Congressional Record—House of Representatives*, vol. 157, no. 41, 112th Cong., 1st Sess. (March 17, 2011), pp. H1910–H1912.

### **Legislation, Laws, Regulations, and Court Cases**

This section describes citation styles for legislative materials (such as bills and resolutions), statutes (public laws), regulations, and court cases. These styles are used in footnotes when citing the source of a direct quotation, when referring readers to a specific provision, or when such sources are discussed in depth in the text. (For information about how to

refer to legislation, public laws, and court cases more generally in the text of CBO documents, see the entries for those terms in the alphabetical section of the style guide.)

Refer to a bill or statute by its short title or popular name. If no short title exists, consult the Office of the General Counsel. A short title need not be repeated in a footnote if it is mentioned in the text being footnoted.

Use commas to separate the elements of a citation; use semicolons to separate multiple citations. (Semicolons may be used instead of commas within an individual citation if necessary to prevent confusion.)

These styles are general guidelines, to which exceptions invariably exist. When in doubt, check with the Office of the General Counsel.

### ***Unenacted Legislation***

Footnote citations for legislation that has not been enacted (whether from the current or a previous Congress) consist of the legislation's short title (if any), the bill or resolution number, the number of the Congress, and the year that the legislation was published (unless that year is part of the short title).

Health Security Act, H.R. 3600, 103rd Cong. (1993).

If referring to specific language in unenacted legislation, give the section number first.

Sec. 213(a) of the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009, H.R. 2454, 111st Cong.

### ***Adopted Resolutions***

Adopted simple or concurrent resolutions are cited with a brief description, the resolution number, the number of the Congress, and the year of adoption, followed by "(adopted)."

Budget resolution for fiscal year 2008, S. Con. Res. 21, 110th Cong. (2007) (adopted).

### ***Public Laws***

Enacted bills and joint resolutions are first published as "slip laws," then compiled chronologically in the *United States Statutes at Large*, and later codified by subject matter in the U.S. Code. The format of a footnote citation for a law depends on how recently the law was enacted, whether it is an appropriation act, and whether the author is referring to a specific provision of the law.

**Recently enacted laws and all appropriation acts:** Cite recent laws and all appropriation acts (whether recent or not) by giving the short title as enacted (if any); the public law (P.L.) number; the *Statutes at Large* citation (which consists of the *Statutes* volume number, the abbreviation "Stat.," and the number of the page on which the law begins);

and the year of enactment (if not part of the short title or if different from the year in the short title, as sometimes happens).

America's Cup Act of 2011, P.L. 112-61, 125 Stat. 753.

Department of Defense, Emergency Supplemental Appropriations to Address Hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico, and Pandemic Influenza Act, 2006, P.L. 109-148, 119 Stat. 2680 (2005).

When referring to a specific provision in the law, give the section number first and, in the *Statutes at Large* citation, include the page number on which the provision begins (after the first page number, separated by a comma).

Sec. 6 of the America's Cup Act of 2011, P.L. 112-61, 125 Stat. 753, 754.

**Laws not recently enacted (other than appropriation acts):** Cite older laws that are not appropriation acts by giving the short title as enacted (if any) and the U.S. Code citation (which consists of the title number of the code, the abbreviation "U.S.C.," the section symbol §, the section number, and the code edition). The main edition of the U.S. Code is published roughly every six years—most recently in 2006—with annual supplements thereafter. For laws that were enacted in 2006 or earlier, use "(2006)"; for laws that were enacted after 2006, or that were enacted earlier and amended after 2006, use "(2006 & Supp.)." (Those years will change when the next main edition of the U.S. Code is published.)

If a statute is codified over 10 or fewer consecutive sections of the U.S. Code, give the first and last section numbers, connected by an en dash. (Use §§ to denote more than one section.)

Newspaper Preservation Act, 15 U.S.C. §§1801–1804 (2006).

If a statute is codified over more than 10 consecutive sections of the U.S. Code, give the first section (with a single §), followed by "et seq."

National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, 42 U.S.C. §4321 et seq. (2006).

When referring to a specific provision, give the section number of the law first and include the public law number.

Sec. 102(d)(3) of the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, P.L. 101-336 (codified at 42 U.S.C. §12112(d)(3) (2006)).

Sec. 101 of the Heroes Earnings Assistance and Relief Tax Act of 2008, P.L. 110-245 (codified at 42 U.S.C. §6428 (2006 & Supp.)).

If a footnote that includes a U.S. Code citation is for a law that amended the Internal Revenue Code, it should cite volume 26 of the U.S. Code. For instance, the footnote reference for the Internal Revenue Code’s definition of charitable contributions would be as follows:

26 U.S.C. §170(c) (2006).

If an older statute is too widely scattered throughout the U.S. Code to be cited easily, use the format described above for recently enacted laws (which includes the public law number and the *Statutes at Large* citation).

Tax Reduction Act of 1975, P.L. 94-12, 89 Stat. 26.

### ***Regulations and Administrative Actions***

In most cases, cite a federal regulation by giving its commonly used name (if one exists) and a citation to the *Code of Federal Regulations* (which consists of the title number of the code, the abbreviation “C.F.R.,” the section symbol §, the section or part number, and the code edition).

FTC Credit Practices Rule, 16 C.F.R. §444 (1995).

If a regulation has not been codified in the *Code of Federal Regulations*, cite its location in the *Federal Register* (“Fed. Reg.”), including the volume number, the page on which the regulation begins, and the full date of publication. When referring to a specific provision in the regulation, include the page on which the provision appears (following the first page number, separated by a comma).

Setting and Adjusting Patent Fees, 78 Fed. Reg. 4212 (January 18, 2013).

For all other agency actions and executive materials that appear in the *Federal Register*, cite the title of the document, the volume number, the page on which the document begins, and the full date of publication.

Locomotive Safety Standards, 76 Fed. Reg. 2200, 2230 (proposed January 12, 2011).

### ***Court Cases***

Footnote citations for court cases follow the style set forth in the Harvard Law Review Association’s *Bluebook*; they consist of the name of the case, the volume number and abbreviation of the reporter (the official recording publication) in which the case is printed, the page on which the case begins, and the court and year of decision. Consult the Office of the General Counsel for more information.

*John McGann v. H&H Music Company*, 946 F.2d 401 (5th Cir. 1991).

When referring to a specific page of a case, include that page number after the number of the page on which the case begins.

*Sullivan v. Zebley*, 493 U.S. 521, 541 (1990).

### **Websites**

The examples below cover sources that are available only online—not in printed form, such as a PDF—and that do not fall into one of the document categories shown elsewhere (such as a journal, news service, press release, or fact sheet).

#### ***Web Page***

References to material that appears only on a web page should include the author's or organization's name; the name of the page (in quotation marks); the date shown on the page, such as the "last updated" date (or the author's "accessed" date if there is no date on the page); and the URL. Providing all of that information may help readers locate the page if the URL changes later.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory, "Frequently Asked Questions About the Atlantic Multidecadal Oscillation (AMO)" (January 13, 2006), [www.aoml.noaa.gov/phod/d2m\\_shift/amo\\_faq.php](http://www.aoml.noaa.gov/phod/d2m_shift/amo_faq.php).

Congressional Budget Office, "Our Processes" (accessed October 25, 2012), [www.cbo.gov/about/our-processes](http://www.cbo.gov/about/our-processes).

#### ***Blog Entry***

Titles of blog posts should appear in quotation marks, as titles of articles do. If the blog has a name, it should appear in italics, as names of periodicals do. (If the name contains the word "blog," as in *CBO Blog*, there is no need to include "blog entry" in the reference.)

Donald Marron, "The Economics of Al-Qaeda in Iraq" (blog entry, December 21, 2010), <http://dmarron.com/2010/12/21/>.

Susan Woodward and Robert Hall, "What to Do About Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac?" *Financial Crisis and Recession* (blog entry, January 28, 2009), [woodwardhall.wordpress.com/2009/01/28/what-to-do-about-fannie-mae-and-freddie-mac](http://woodwardhall.wordpress.com/2009/01/28/what-to-do-about-fannie-mae-and-freddie-mac).

### **Other Sources**

This category covers material that in pre-Internet days was considered unpublished, such as draft reports, dissertations, papers presented at conferences, press releases, fact sheets, briefings, and information provided through personal communications. Titles of such

sources should appear in quotation marks, not italics. Those sources can be difficult for readers to locate, so include a URL whenever possible, even if it goes to a large PDF.

### ***Unpublished Draft***

A paper is considered an unpublished draft if it was written by someone affiliated with an organization but was not officially released by that organization or published by a journal. (If the paper was presented at a conference, use the format for conference papers below.)

Christopher Mayer and R. Glenn Hubbard, “House Prices, Interest Rates, and the Mortgage Market Meltdown” (draft, Columbia Business School, October 2008), [www4.gsb.columbia.edu/null?&exclusive=filemgr.download&file\\_id=3549](http://www4.gsb.columbia.edu/null?&exclusive=filemgr.download&file_id=3549).

### ***Dissertation***

Lisa Kimmel, “The Effect of Tort Reform on Economic Growth” (Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Economics, University of California, Berkeley, 2001), <http://sunzi.lib.hku.hk/ER/detail/hkul/2762138>.

### ***Conference Paper or Lecture***

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