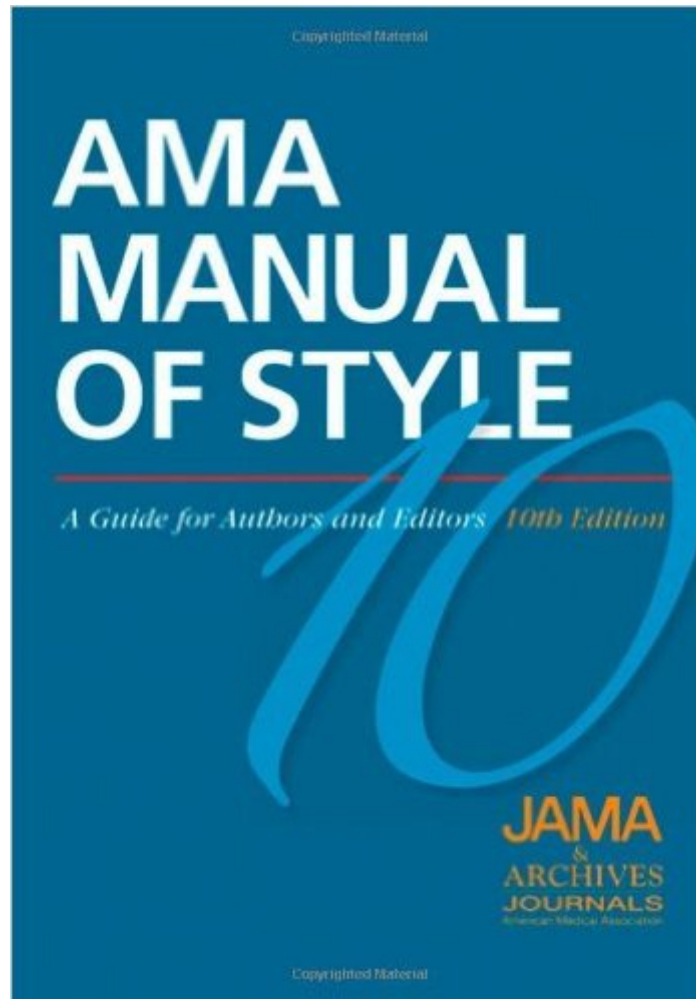


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# AMA Manual Of Style: A Guide For Authors And Editors



## Synopsis

For decades indispensable, the *AMA Manual of Style* continues to provide editorial support to the medical and scientific publishing community. Since the 1998 publication of the 9th edition, however, the world of medical publishing has rapidly modernized, and the intersection of research and publishing has become ever more complex. The 10th edition of the *AMA Manual of Style* brings this definitive manual into the 21st century with a broadened international perspective. In doing so, the 10th edition has expanded its electronic guidelines, with the understanding that authors now routinely submit articles through online systems and often cite Web-only content. Ethical and legal issues receive increased attention, with detailed guidelines on authorship, conflicts of interest, scientific misconduct, intellectual property, and the protection of individuals' rights in scientific research and publication. The new edition examines research ethics and editorial independence and features new material on indexing and searching as well as medical nomenclature. The *JAMA Network*, one of the most respected groups of medical publications in the world, have lent members of their expert staff of professional journal editors to the committee that has produced this edition. Extensively peer-reviewed, the 10th edition provides a welcome and improved standard for the growing international medical community. More than a style manual, this 10th edition offers invaluable guidance on how to navigate the dilemmas that authors and researchers and their institutions, medical editors and publishers, and members of the news media who cover scientific research confront in a society that has thrust these issues center stage. Also available in an online version!

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## Customer Reviews

At long last, the 10th Edition of the *AMA Manual of Style* is finally available, and I am happy to say it was worth the wait. As an editor who has worked in medical journals, scientific Web sites, and an agency specializing in pharmaceutical advertising, I found the 9th edition to be, at times, a bit dated and not as easy to navigate as I would have hoped. Most of those problems have been resolved in the 10th edition, as well as the inclusion of some new information that I didn't even know I was missing until I found it. The following is a list of changes in the new edition of the style guide that I found particularly helpful and relevant, and will hopefully be a quick go-to guide when you're debating whether to buy the new version or hold fast to the 9th edition.

- The section on Correct and Preferred Usage has moved from Chapter 9 to Chapter 11 and includes a wealth of information that was not in the previous edition. There is more information about the difference between race and ethnicity and when it's relevant to include sexual orientation in a scientific manuscript.
- An extended section on electronic references (3.15, 63-72). This new info is highly relevant considering since 1998 (when the 9th edition was released) there have been a number of innovations with the Internet and a number of authors choose to use the Web as sources of information.
- The section on manuscript preparation is vastly improved and expanded (Ch 4). It includes more information on the different types of tables and figures as well as new guidelines for the use of symbols and footnotes.

Style manuals are written either for editors or for authors, rarely for both. The *AMA manual* is a text only editors could love, it serves the interests of authors mostly as an afterthought. The "Instructions for Authors" on JAMA's website presents the essential requirements of the style in a more concise format for journal articles, the vehicles of research reporting. This is also two texts in one, a text on style and a text on medical terminology and ethics, a dubious combination. Style, by its very nature, is well served by a ten-year publication cycle. It should change only very slowly. Medical terminology, on the other hand, is in a constant state of flux. Authors working in a field are well aware of the accepted nomenclature without the need to be reminded by an inevitably dated style manual. This text is written for editors at some remove from medical practice and research. This review, on the other hand, is from an author's point of view. The last edition of the *AMA manual* (1997) sought to impose the metric system on clinical measures. This initiative failed. It was simply ignored in preference to the conventional measures used in clinical practice. The new *AMA style* requires a conventional measure to be followed by a metric conversion factor. For example, the new *AMA manual* is a heavy tome, the one-thousand-plus page text weighs 4.2 pounds (to convert to kilograms multiply by 0.45). This is a sensible and useful requirement. However, you need not buy

the manual to get the exhaustive conversion table, it's available on the JAMA website. The new manual also accepts the "versioning" of online documents as research references.

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