

## 6. Punctuation

By and large, AFS publications follow the *Chicago Manual of Style* in matters of punctuation. This chapter is primarily concerned with (1) areas in which AFS style differs from that in the *Chicago Manual* and (2) situations that tend to cause difficulty for authors.

### PUNCTUATION MARKS

#### Colons

- 6.1** When emphasis is desired, a colon may be used to introduce a secondary clause that is closely related to the main clause:

This approach often leads to a serious problem: noncomparable data.

The results are quite clear: recruitment is a function of stream temperature.

Note that the secondary clause need not be complete and that the first word is not capitalized even when the clause is complete.

- 6.2** A colon may also be used to introduce a list, provided that it does not come between a verb and its object or after an expression like “such as” and “namely”:

The following treatments were administered: x, y, and z.

The treatments were x, y, and z. *not* The treatments were: x, y, and z.

Certain substrates were preferred: sand, gravel, and cobble.

Certain substrates were preferred, namely, sand, gravel, and cobble.

- 6.3** In scientific papers, colons are often used to indicate ratios:

strontium : calcium Sr:Ca 1:1

Note that when the ratio is expressed in words there should be full spaces around the colon. When a number follows a letter, there should be small spaces around the colon:

12 h light : 12 h dark

#### Commas

- 6.4** Commas should be used after items in a series:

egg, alevin, and fry stages *not* egg, alevin and fry stages

- 6.5** With the exception noted in section 6.7, commas should be used after long introductory phrases:

After an acclimation period of 72 h, the fish. . . .

They may be omitted after short introductory phrases, however:

One week later the fish. . . .

By 1999 the situation had changed.

- 6.6** With the exception noted in section 6.7, commas should be used to separate independent clauses that are joined by the words “and,” “but,” “for,” “or,” “so,” and “yet”:

Previous research suggested that survival was density dependent, and our findings strongly support that conclusion.

Commas should not be used when one clause shares its subject with another clause:

We collected the data and performed an analysis of variance on them.

- 6.7** Commas should not be used after introductory phrases that are associated with the second independent clause in a compound sentence or to separate independent clauses with a common introductory phrase:

Specimens were obtained by gill netting, and although the samples were not as large as expected they were adequate for our purposes.

At the laboratory, DNA samples were extracted from the fish and electrophoresis was performed to determine whether the populations were genetically distinct.

- 6.8** Semicolons should be used instead of commas to separate independent clauses that are joined by one of the following adverbs:

also	anyway	besides	consequently
finally	furthermore	hence	however
indeed	instead	likewise	incidentally
next	still	then	meanwhile
thus	moreover	therefore	nevertheless
otherwise			

Tests showed no significant differences between groups 1 and 2; therefore, these groups were pooled in subsequent analyses.

**6.9** Commas may be used with appositives and material of a parenthetical nature:

The dependent variable,  $y_i$ , was defined as. . . .

The study area, which comprises all or part of three administrative districts, . . .

In some cases, however, it may be preferable to put such material within parentheses per se.

Ellipses (Dots)

**6.10** Ellipses are used to indicate omissions in quotations:

“Fisheries management draws on bioenergetics, genetics . . . and other specialties.”

“This finding was considered definitive. . . .”

Note that the dots are separated by spaces and that four dots are used when the omission occurs at the end of a sentence.

Em and En Dashes

**6.11** In text, em dashes may be used to emphasize material of a parenthetical nature as long as such use is sparing:

Determining the toxicity to fish—the principal goal of the experiment—was problematical.

**6.12** The principal use of en dashes is to indicate a range of numbers or other sequential items:

6–10 mm May–July 1996

Note that hyphens are used with nonsequential numbers:

Project 83-465

**6.13** In AFS publications, en dashes are also used as a replacement for “and,” “to,” and “at” in compounds:

Beverton–Holt length–weight relationship University of Wisconsin–Madison

Hyphens should be used in compounds not involving “and,” “to,” or “at”:

length-frequency analysis [i.e., of the frequency distribution of lengths]

Smith-Root [compound name]

## Hyphens

- 6.14** Hyphens are used primarily in (1) compound words, (2) compound names, (3) grant and project numbers, and (4) chemical names:

gill-net fishery clear-cut areas *P*-value

Cavalli-Sforza

grant GB-6708 Project FWS-97-12

glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase 2,4-D

See Chapter 10 and Appendix A for additional information on the use of hyphens in compound words; see sections 6.12–6.13 for situations in which en dashes are used instead of hyphens.

## Semicolons

- 6.15** The most common use of semicolons is to connect closely related clauses:

The finding of . . . was highly unusual; as a result, we. . . .

See section 6.8 for additional information on this use of the semicolon.

- 6.16** Semicolons may also be used to separate items in a list when they are lengthy or complex:

We obtained fish samples from the following reaches (indicated by river kilometers): 67–73, which is free-flowing; 47–51, which is impounded by the dam; and 6–11, which is largely regulated by dam operations.

- 6.17** In AFS publications, semicolons are also used to separate citations and to group items in parentheses logically:

(Smith 1999; Thompson 2001)

( $F_{1,29} = 7.98$ ,  $P = 0.034$ ; Table 1)

## Solidi (Forward Slashes)

- 6.18** In ordinary text (as opposed to mathematical expressions and special symbols), a solidus is equivalent to the word “or”—even though it is often mistakenly used as a substitute for the word “and.” To avoid ambiguity, spell out compound terms rather than using solidi:

morbidity and mortality *not* morbidity/mortality

## USE WITH QUOTATION MARKS, ITALICS, AND BOLDFACE

- 6.19** In expressions involving quotation marks, periods and commas are always placed inside the quotation marks and colons and semicolons are always placed outside of them. Dashes, question marks, and exclamation points are placed inside the quotation marks when they are part of the quoted material and outside when they apply to the entire sentence (see the examples in section 7.4)
- 6.20** Punctuation marks should be in ordinary type even when they come immediately after terms in italic or boldface type:

. . . populations of rainbow trout *O. mykiss*, which. . .

. . . the variance–covariance matrix **X**.