GENESIS OF LEGEND PUBLISHING

STYLE GUIDE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

WHY A STYLE GUIDE?

Writing both art and craft. A good piece of text depends on the practical implementation of ephemeral ideas. This guide is meant to support the craft of writing and revising the written word.

The first section of the guide provides a Writing Toolkit, filled with advice for improving existing text. These tools will help you transform draft text into stylish, elegant and dynamic end product. These are optional yet strongly recommended. It's at the start because of how frequently referenced it is.

Next is the Rules and Standards section. This includes guidance on acceptable spelling conventions for Canadian English. It addresses grammar, punctuation and formatting. This is a mandatory section of the guide.

After that are Common Mistakes. These are some lists of frequent errors that editors should be looking for when correcting work. This is useful for detecting errors but is only advice.

Last is the section dedicated to the Spark Roleplaying Game. It has a list of game terms and a few specific rules for the gameline.

This guide is inspired heavily by the works of many master wordsmiths who came before. I strongly recommend you purchase these fine books for more tools and guidance on writing.

- *On Writing*, by Stephen King
- *On Writing Well*, by William Zinsser
- *The Canadian Style*, by Dundurn Press Limited & The Government of Canada
- *The Elements of Style* (4th edition), by Strunk and White
- *Writing Tools: 50 essential strategies for every Writer*, by Roy Peter Clark

WRITING TOOLKIT

WRITE A MISSION STATEMENT

My goal in creating this writing toolkit is to record essential techniques for writing and editing texts. Gaming texts are the specific form of writing that these tools are meant to support. This is an example of one such writing tool; creating a mission statement.

MY MASTER PLAN

Index the big parts of your story. This provides a variety of different benefits.

- Improving Writing: By showing a clear order for your text, you can ensure that the purpose of each section is consistent, ensure you don't miss anything.
- Mental Space: By giving labels to collections of similar elements, you provide the reader with a mental framework to organize and learn the content.
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STAY IN THE PRESENT

Keep your writing in the present tense. It imparts more energy and more of a sense of immediacy that way.

Jack dashes through the flames. NOT Jack had dashed through the flames.

ACTIVATE YOUR VOICE

Keep your writing in the Active Voice by default. This makes the sentences shorter, clearer and shows that the subject is dynamic. Limit the passive voice to express uncertainty, ambiguity, victimization of the subject or obfuscation.

Sue holds the pen tightly. NOT The pen is being tightly held by Sue.

SHOW; DON'T TELL ME HOW TRITE THIS ADVICE IS.

Don`t state a trait if you are able to explain what observable effect that has in the narrative. Don't name an emotion. *The man's knees wobbled as he gingerly eased himself into his chair. NOT The man was old and frail.*

BE POSITIVE

Don't be negative, with a depressing tone that will make every sentence wordy and dull. Keep using positive and upbeat terms instead, describing the qualities rather than the deficiencies. In short, use positive words to make your point.

CONCISE

Use one sentence for each basic idea. Don't fluff with unnecessary intro phrases or padding. If it doesn't add clarity, cut it.

CHOOSE PERFECT WORDS

Always try to find the perfect words, the most precise and specific language, to say what you mean. Be certain that you fully understand the connotations and denotations of each of your precise words.

USE ADDITIVE ADVERBS

Avoid using adverbs which don't add anything new to the sentence. There is no reason to say that *the bezerker is raging furiously*. Raging implies or even requires fury, so that adverb isn't necessary.

KEEP TRACK OF COMPLEXITY

Complex topics lead to convulsion, while simple ones are easy to understand. Look at your paragraphs and rank them as Easy, Medium or Hard. You can decrease the complexity of the Hard paragraphs with shorter sentences and more examples. You can trim away the examples and merge simplistic sentences found in Easy paragraphs to increase their complexity.

Or to rephrase that last sentence in a better fashion; *In the Paragraphs, you can safely reduce the number of examples. At the same time, see if you can merge some of the simpler sentences together to make a more well-rounded sentence.*

TEMPO HELP

Look at your sentences and consider at what pace they would be read. If you want to slow the tempo, choose your punctuation appropriately.

- A comma would work like a small speed bump, a momentary pause.
- A semicolon is a longer pause; it encourages you to continue reading.
- A colon gives a solid break: It supports lists or what would be sentence fragments.
- An em-dash is a long break in a sentence — emphasizing an essential portion of text — almost in the opposite fashion as a parenthesis.
- A period is a hard stop for a sentence.

IT'S NOT THE SIZE OF THE SENTENCE LADDY, IT'S HOW YOU USE IT.

Vary sentence length to alter complexity, set the emotional tone or match the speed of a described action. Short sentences are perfect for important emotional messages, complex issues or swift actions.

The car braked hard. The little body crumpled. Cynthia wept.

EMPHASIS IS THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA

The First words in a sentence will claim the reader`s attention, as will the Last. That is why they are excellent places to put your subject. If your purpose is to deemphasize a particular detail, put it in the middle of a paragraph.

START WITH A BANG

Begin sentences with subjects and verbs. Creating sentences this way is referred to as a right branching sentence and drives the action forward. Avoid articles or prepositions such as "The" and don't use however at the start of the work.

GIVE KEY WORDS THEIR SPACE

Never repeat an important word in the same sentence. Avoid repeating the same word in the same paragraph, unless that repetition is for an explicit purpose.

TWIST YOUR CLICHÉ

Find a tired phrase, one as old as Methuselah? I think that Methusela's weathered cane might sound a bit older. Take the cliché and alter it so it's interpreted differently.

CHOOSE YOUR NUMBERS OF ITEMS CAREFULLY.

One item indicates that said item is exclusive and critical to the subject. *Power.*
Two items divides the subject into two nearly conflicting things. *Comparaison.*
Three is a sweet spot that gives a sense of the whole. *Completeness.*
Four, five and six are the largest easily remembered numbers of items. *Many.*
Seven or more items is a large list which individuals can't be expected to keep track of.

BACKWARDS IT READ

Read the text backwards from the end of the paragraph to the start. This will stop you from "understanding" the text and allow you to focus on the individual sentences.

BEWARE OF INAPPROPRIATELY ELEVATED LANGUAGE – CUT THE JARGON

Sometimes, in an effort to sound more reliable or authoritative, or more sophisticated, we puff up our prose with this sort of language. Usually we only end up sounding like we're trying to sound smart—which is a sure sign to our readers that we're not. If you find yourself inserting words or phrases because you think they'll sound impressive, reconsider. If your ideas are good, you don't need to strain for impressive language; if they're not, that language won't help anyway.

OR NOT TO BE

Find any words that indicate being, that also happen to be paired with a verb. This includes "to be", "is", "are", "was", and "am".   Try to remove those words and depend on the natural strength of the verb.

"Robert ran toward the Dragon". NOT "Robert was running towards the Dragon."

LORD "OF THE" APOSTROPHE

For direct speech, where you don't wish to imply formality or age, consider replacing "Of the" with a simple apostrophe.

 "The stranger's cloak." NOT "The cloak of the stranger"

USE DECLARATIVE STATEMENTS WITHOUT WILL

Certain types of RPG's use a conditional future tense, particularly in adventure scenarios. Try to drop the word "will" to make it more direct.

"If attacked, the demon presses the button." NOT ""If attacked, the demon will press the button"

SO PERHAPS THAT REALLY ISN'T QUITE JUST

Here are a few of the key words that you should try to remove first.

- So: This is almost always unnecessary.
- Perhaps: Sometimes your characters may use this to indicate uncertainty. The trouble is, "perhaps" reflects uncertainty to the reader too so use it with care and only in dialogue.
- Just: The only time this word is actually a word is when you use it to mean, "guided by truth, reason, justice, and fairness".
- Really: This is an adverb that is really underwhelming.
- Quite: It is timid and quiet which is perhaps why the word "quite" often gets misspelled as "quiet". The words in your story should be empowered and confident.
- That: This word needs careful consideration as the word "that" is sometimes used to define the subject of the sentence.

DECIMATE YOUR DRAFT

As you revise your first draft, aim to cut approximately 10% of the total word count. Each subsequent draft should ~~theoretically~~ cut ~~a similar portion~~ *a tenth* of your remaining word-count.

SAY IT WITH FEELING

Read the text aloud to detect flaws. Examine anything that sounds odd and if possible, try to rephrase those passages verbally and write those corrections down.

RULES AND STANDARDS

SPELLING

Spelling poses a major problem in Canadian English because of the intermixing of British and American standards. Partly as a result of our historical links with Britain and our proximity to the United States, Canadian spelling has tended to waver between the forms used in these two countries, so that, to this day, there is no clearly established Canadian standard.

In light of these recommendations, use the following variant spellings: endings in *ize, ization, our, re*, single *l* (as in *instil*) and *ce*; single *l* in words such as *enrolment*; *ll* in *travelled*, etc.; and *e* for digraphs (exceptions: *aesthetic* and *onomatopoeic*).

Forms	British	American	Preferred
verbs ending in *ise/ize* and their derived forms	civilise, civilisation	civilize, civilization	American
	organise, organisation	organize, organization	American
	specialise, specialisation	specialize, specialization	American
nouns ending in *our/or*	colour	color	British
	honour	honor	British
	favour	favor	British
nouns ending in re/er:	centre	center	British
	fibre	fiber	British
	theatre	theater	British
verbs with single l/double l and their derivatives:	instil	instill	British
	fulfil, fulfilment	fulfill, fulfillment	British
	enrol, enrolment	enroll, enrollment	British
nouns in *ce/se*[1]	defence	defense	British
	offence	offense	British
	pretence	pretense	British
double l/single l in the past tense of verbs:	counselled	counseled	British
	travelled	traveled	British
treatment of the digraphs ae and oe in words derived from Greek and Latin:	anaemia,	anemia,	American
	encyclopaedia	encyclopedia	American
	oecumenical	ecumenical	American

WORD DIVISION

In order to ensure clear, unambiguous presentation, avoid dividing words at the end of a line as much as possible. If word division is necessary, text comprehension and readability should be your guides.

UNITS OF MEASURE

Try to avoid using any units of measure, referring to relative amounts instead. For example, rather than "four feet" or "a meter", state "arms length." If you must use a unit of measure, use the S.I. Units.

Distance: centimetre, metre, kilometre

Weight/Mass: gram, kilogram, tonne

Time: second, minute, hour, day

Temperature: Celsius   (water freezes at 0°C, room temperature is 20°C, water boils at 100°C)

THE COMMA

a)   In order to ensure clear, unambiguous presentation, always use the Oxford Comma otherwise known as the serial comma. In a series of three or more terms, use a comma after each term except the last. *To my parents, Ayn Rand, and God.*

b)   Commas can serve either to illuminate the grammar of a sentence or to point out the flow and pace of the sentence. They can be used to separate items on lists, join two complete sentences.

c)   A pair of commas can identify additional, supplemental information within a sentence. *My uncle Robert, who just came back from the war, was drunk again.*

d)   A comma may be used to indicate that words have been omitted: *The African countries sent six representatives; the Asian countries, five.*

e)   As a general rule, commas interrupt the flow of a sentence and should therefore not be used where they do not contribute to clarity. A sentence requiring a large number of commas for clarity is probably a poorly constructed one in need of rephrasing. Yet the comma is also the mark most often incorrectly omitted.

APOSTROPHE

a)   Indicate possession by adding an apostrophe followed by an s: *The cat's tail, meaning the tail belonging to one cat.*

b)   Nouns which are made plural must have a sibilant S-sound at the end without an apostrophe. This is typically done by adding an s to the end of the word, although certain nouns might already have an -s, -se, -z, -ze, -ce, -x, or –xe in singular form and would retain them when pluralized: *There are 32 cats.*

c)   If a noun ends with an s and you need to indicate possession, add an apostrophe after the existing s: *The cats' tails, meaning the tails of many cats.*

d)   No apostrophe is used in the following possessive pronouns and adjectives: *yours*, *his*, *hers*, *ours*, *its*, *theirs*, and *whose*.

e)   If possession is shared by two or more subjects, add an apostrophe followed by an s. to the last word only: *Adam and Eve's progeny*

f)   Use apostrophes to indicate time or quantity. *A week's time, two weeks' later*

g)   Use apostrophes for contractions: *Don't* for *do not.*

h)   Use apostrophes for plurals of words or letters: *The do's and the a's*

HYPHENATION AND DASHES

Hyphenate when it adds clarity. If a hyphen would make the meaning of the sentence less clear, do not add a hyphen. In general terms, use a hyphen to join two words.

a)   These can be two nouns of equal importance: *city-state, writer-editor*
b)   These can link two words to remove ambiguity: *duty-free goods means the goods were duty-free*
c)   If you have a compound of an adjective and a noun ending in "ed": *able-bodied, many-sided, short-handed*
d)   If you have a prefix joined to a proper noun or adjective: *mid-July, trans-Siberian, un-American*
e)   An em-dash is only used to indicate an interruption in thought or to replace parentheses with more emphasis on the contents.
f)   Do not use the en-dash. Use the hyphen instead whenever an en-dash would apply.

CAPITALIZATION

Capital letters have three basic uses, of which nearly all others may be regarded as particular cases: (1) to give emphasis, as in official titles and initial words; (2) to distinguish proper nouns and adjectives from common ones; and (3) to highlight words in headings and captions.

In English the first letter of certain words is capitalized to give emphasis and to clarify sentence structure and meaning for the reader.

a)   Capitalize the first word of a sentence or sentence equivalent: *What a pity!*
b)   Capitalize proper nouns and proper game terms. All game terms are listed and defined in this document.
c)   Capitalize the first word of a complete sentence enclosed in parentheses when it stands alone, but not when it is enclosed within another sentence: *The speaker concluded by citing facts and figures to support her contention. (Details may be found on p. 37.)*
d)   The personal pronoun *I* and the vocative *O* are always capitalized in English; *oh* is capitalized only when it begins a sentence or stands alone.
e)   Capitalize a nickname (a word or phrase used as part of, or instead of, a personal name)
f)   As a general rule, capitalize an adjective derived from a proper noun or a name used adjectivally: *Canadian whisky, Franciscan friar*
g)   Any specific institution or generic noun used as short form of a title is capitalized: *The Institute, the First Baptist Church, the Liberal Party.*
h)   Capitalize all civil, military, religious and professional titles and titles of nobility. Capitalize titles of respect and forms of address, even when used in the plural:
i)   Capitalize the names and nicknames of military bases, forces and units of all sizes and of exercises:
j)   Capitalize the names of months and days, of holidays and holy days, of historical and geological periods and events, and of parliamentary sessions: Do not capitalize the names of the seasons, centuries or decades unless they are personified or are part of special names:
k)   Capitalize nouns and adjectives designating literary, philosophical, musical, religious and artistic periods, movements and styles when they are derived from proper nouns:
l)   Capitalize names, synonyms and personifications of deities and other supernatural beings:
m)   Capitalize the names of countries, regions, counties, cities and other official and specified political, administrative and geographical divisions and topographical features
n)   Capitalize nouns and adjectives referring to race, tribe, nationality and language
o)   Capitalize the official names of specific buildings, monuments, squares, parks, etc.

PERIOD SPACE

a)   As a general rule, in English there is no space before and one space after a punctuation mark.

b)   No space before or after a period when followed by a comma or a closing quotation mark, parenthesis or bracket.   *(See Chapter 21.) Welcome to John Fraser Jr., Ellen and Bob.*

c)   One space before and none after an opening parenthesis or bracket within a sentence; no space before or after a closing parenthesis or bracket when followed by a punctuation mark:

d)   Do not use a period at the end of any form of heading (other than run-in sideheads), legend or the like, or after a date line or signature. Do not use periods with acronyms.

HEADINGS

Headings (or heads) are used to introduce a change of subject in a report or other document and to indicate a hierarchy of topics. They are designed to guide readers and enable them to find the pages where a particular topic is discussed. Keep the headings identical in terms of size, capitalization and numbering. You can set off the heading by various means depending, among other things, on how many levels of heading there are. These means include capitalization (full or initial letter only), underlining, centring, spacing, type size and the use of italic or boldface type.

Punctuation should be kept to a minimum in headings, and the wording should be as succinct as possible without being ambiguous. No periods are required, except in run-in heads. Unless a heading is centred or full capitalization is used, only the first word and proper nouns are normally capitalized. In centred headings, capitalize the first letter of each word except the following (unless they are the initial word):

a)   articles

b)   short conjunctions (fewer than four letters)

c)   short prepositions (fewer than four letters)

REFERENCES

The author's name may be that of a person or persons or of a corporate body. A person's surname precedes a given name or initials. The article (*A*, *An* or *The*) at the beginning of a corporate author's name is usually omitted, as is any term identifying the nature of the enterprise, such as *Inc.* or *Co.*:

The place of publication, publisher's name and date of publication should be enclosed in parentheses, but page references should remain outside the parentheses. The author's name is followed by a comma, the name of the place of publication is followed by a colon and one space, and the publisher's name is followed by a comma. A comma follows the parentheses:

Michael Ondaatje, *The Cinnamon Peeler* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1992), p. 13.

When citing an edition other than the first one, indicate the edition used in Arabic numerals and abbreviate the word "edition" as "ed.":

An Article on the Internet (http://www.example.com or http://www.shrt2a.com)

COMMON MISTAKES

LATIN ABBREVIATIONS

Beware of confusing and misusing the following abbreviations:

- e.g. = for example
- i.e. = that is, specifically, namely
- etc. = and so on

- et al. = and others
- c., ca. = about, approximately
- q.v. = see this word (*in cross-references*)

WORDS WITH *EI* AND *IE*

The jingle "*i* before *e* except after *c* or when sounded as *a* as in *neighbour* and *weigh*" covers the rule.

Exceptions

- either
- weird
- Sovereign

- neither
- foreign

- height
- seize

- forfeit
- leisure

WORDS ENDING IN *ISE* AND *IZE*

The following are the only common words ending in *ise*:

- advertise
- advise
- apprise
- arise
- chastise

- circumcise
- comprise
- compromise
- demise
- despise
- devise

- disguise
- enterprise
- excise
- exercise
- franchise
- guise

- improvise
- incise
- merchandise
- mortise
- premise
- reprise

- revise
- supervise
- surmise
- surprise
- televise

VERBS ENDING IN *SEDE*, *CEED* AND *CEDE*

Supersede is the only verb ending in *sede. Exceed, proceed* and *succeed* are the only common verbs ending in *ceed.* Verbs ending in *cede* include the following:

- accede
- antecede

- cede
- concede

- intercede
- precede

- recede
- secede

WHO AND WHOM

Here is a quick tip to distinguish between Who and Whom. "Who verbs whom?"

FREQUENTLY MISUSED OR CONFUSED WORDS

accuracy, precision
Accuracy is a measure of how closely a fact or value approaches the true value and the degree to which something is free of error. *Precision* is a measure of the fineness of a value. Thus, 6.0201 is more precise than 6.02, but it may not be more accurate (if one of the last two digits is incorrect).

affect, effect
Affect, as a verb, usually means influence.
As a verb, *effect* means bring about; as a noun, it means result, impact.

allusion, illusion
An *allusion* is an indirect reference; *illusion* applies to something appearing to be true or real, but actually not existing or being quite different from what it seems.

assume, presume
The material following *assume* expresses a theory or even a hypothesis, whereas the words following *presume* express what the subject believes to be the case for want of proof to the contrary.

assure, ensure
To *assure* is to guarantee (a thing to a person) and to remove doubt, uncertainty or worry from a person's mind. The primary meaning of *ensure* is to make sure or certain.

attentiveness, attention
Attentiveness is the quality or state of being attentive or considerate. *Attention* refers to the ability to concentrate or the action or faculty of attending to a matter.

characteristic, distinctive, typical
A *characteristic* quality is one that distinguishes and identifies. A *distinctive* feature denotes an attribute that sets a thing or person apart from a type or group. *Typical* relates to the characteristics peculiar to the type, class, species or group to which a thing or person belongs.

classic, classical
As adjectives, the words are partly interchangeable. Nevertheless, *classic* should be used when the meaning is a famous or supreme example of its type, while *classical* is preferred in reference to ancient Greek and Roman culture or to any music composed in a traditional, serious style.

common, mutual
Common means belonging to many or to all. *Mutual* means reciprocal.

compliment, complement
A *compliment* expresses praise, admiration or flattery. Things that are *complementary* may be different, but together they form a complete unit or supplement one other.

continual, continuous
While the distinction between these words can sometimes become blurred, the rule is that *continual* implies a close recurrence in time or a rapid succession of events. *Continuous* means uninterrupted in time or sequence.

council, counsel
A *council* is a governing or consultative body (*city council*, *council of grand chiefs*, *student council*) made up of *councillors*. *Counsel* pertains to advice and guidance, (*counsel for the defence*). *Counsel* is provided by *counsellors*.

defective, deficient
Defective is that which is wanting in quality; *deficient* is that which is wanting in quantity.

dependant, dependent
Dependant is the noun, *dependent* the adjective.

different, various
As a general rule, *different* implies separateness or contrariness, while *various* stresses number and diversity of sorts or kinds.

effective, efficient
Effective refers to producing the desired result (*effective* ways of combatting pollution). It can also have the meanings of in force (a law) and actual (the *effective* leader was the commander of the armed forces). *Efficient* refers to the skilful use of time and energy to produce desired results with little effort.

either . . . or, neither . . . nor
The constructions *either. . . or* and *neither . . . nor* should be used to co-ordinate two words, phrases or clauses. Note that the constructions following these correlatives should be parallel and that the verb agrees in number with the nearer subject.

fewer, lesser, less
Fewer is used when referring to number; *lesser* and *less* are used for quantity, amount, size or number when the number is thought of as an amount.

flaunt, flout
Flaunt means display boastfully, whereas *flout* means treat with contemptuous disregard.

gender, sex
Sex should be used in reference to biological categories and sexually motivated phenomena or behaviour, whereas *gender* should be used for social or cultural categories.

imply, infer
Imply refers to meaning intended by the speaker, whereas *infer* refers to meaning understood by the receiver of a message.

intense, intensive
Intense means existing in a high degree, strong, extreme; *intensive* means highly concentrated, thorough.

its, it's
Its is the possessive form of *it*. *It's* is a contraction of *it is* or *it has.*

least, less
It is incorrect to use *least* when comparing only two persons or things.

procedure, process
The words are not interchangeable. A *procedure* is a set way of doing something. It stresses the method or routine followed. A *process* is a series of progressive and interdependent steps carried out to obtain a particular result.

raise, rise
As a verb, *raise* takes an object, whereas *rise* does not.

reason is because
A sentence beginning "The reason . . . is (was)" should be followed by a noun, a noun phrase, or a noun clause usually introduced by *that.*

sanction
As a noun, *sanction* has two almost directly opposed meanings. It can mean official approval or authority as well as a penalty to enforce behaviour. As a verb, it can only mean to authorize or to legitimize.

seasonal, seasonable
Seasonal means of or occurring in a particular season; *seasonable* means normal for the time of year or timely. The corresponding adverbs are *seasonally* and *seasonably.*

till, until
Till and *until* are interchangeable as prepositions and as conjunctions, although the latter is somewhat more formal. Avoid *'til* and *up until.*

try and, try to
Although both expressions are idiomatic, they are not always interchangeable. *Try to* is more appropriate to formal writing.

unique
This is an absolute. Do not write *very unique* or *rather unique*. Similarly, many other absolute adjectives (*perfect, empty, circular, perpendicular, right, eternal* and so on), when used in their strict sense, should not be modified by a comparative or superlative adverb. Note that *unique* is preceded by the indefinite article *a* (not *an*).

who's, whose
The form *who's* is a contraction of *who is. Whose* is the possessive form of *who.*

SPARK RPG GUIDELINES

CAPITALIZED GAME TERMS

Belief	Collaboration	Game Moderator (GM)
Attribute	Setting	Non-Protagonist Character (NPC)
Body (attribute)	The Question	
Heart (attribute)	The Platform	Protagonist Character (PC)
Mind (attribute)	The Tilt	Influence
Spark (attribute)	Character Sheet	Minor NPC
Talent	Faction Sheet	Major NPC
Faction	Setting Sheet	Fact
Conflict	Belief Sheet	

OTHER KEY PRINCIPLES

The default assumption in the text is that the GM is female and the players are male.

In example text, incorporate the dice images for all of the results.