

Story Notes:

1. **Create a personal editing checklist.** Use these story notes as a basis to build a personal editing checklist. Add other items you often overlook and use these sheets to check your future stories *before* submitting them for review.
2. **Social titles.** Social titles like Mr., Mrs., Ms., Dr., etc., are always abbreviated when they precede the person's name.

I ran into Dr. Robertson at the grocery store.

3. **Abbreviations.** Using abbreviations for states, types of roads, etc., is not grammatically incorrect, but we are writers, and words are our currency. I strongly encourage you to choose words over abbreviations whenever possible.

I turned onto Sixtieth Street and made it to Jasmine Avenue before I ran out of gas.

I am going to Jackson Hole, Wyoming, on vacation.

One exception is the District of Columbia. The *Chicago Manual of Style* recommends using the two-character postal abbreviation with no periods separating the letters.

It was my first visit to Washington, DC.

4. **Professional, military, religious, and civil titles.** Unless the person's title appears *before* his/her name, it should be lowercase, always.

County Commissioner James Washington gave a speech last night.

James Washington, county commissioner, gave a speech last night.

5. **Feet and inches.** Creative writers follow the *Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS)*. CMOS states that measurements of feet and inches should be written in words, not numerals.

Standing six feet, six inches, Richard towered above his five-foot, five-and-a-half-inch-tall girlfriend.

6. **Numbers.** Use words to spell out all numbers below 101, including ages, and use numerals for (almost) everything 101 and above.

*I bought six new books. I'll add those to my collection of 600.
My class has thirty-two students. My hometown has only 400 people.*

7. **Commas after states and countries.** If you reference a city, state, and/or country, you should place a comma after the city, state, and country before you continue with your sentence.

Oia, Santorini, Greece, is my favorite place to visit.

8. **Stick with American spellings.** Many words have American and non-American spellings. Ensure you are using the correct spelling.

*I traveled (not travelled) to Europe this summer.
I love the color (not colour) purple.
I canceled (not cancelled) my doctor's appointment.*

9. **Repetition.** We have at least one million words in the English language, so we don't need to repeat words in the same or nearby sentences. Make use of a thesaurus for help.

*I moved to South Florida, and then, I moved to Wisconsin.
I moved to South Florida, and then, I relocated to Wisconsin.*