EIA Writing Style Guide

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EIA Writing Style Guide

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www.eia.gov/eiawritingstyleguide.pdf

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Introduction to the
EIA Writing Style Guide

*This style guide is
an update of the edition
released in December 2020.*

Purpose

We created the *EIA Writing Style Guide* to help EIA writers produce consistent, accurate, and readable content. The style guide provides guidance on style issues—including capitalization, punctuation, word usage, and tone—most relevant to EIA writing. The style guide primarily applies to all EIA external communications; however, this guidance is also useful for ensuring more consistent and effective internal communications. For example, presentations and documents that are shared within EIA and across other DOE program offices should follow EIA style.

Language is constantly evolving, and to keep in step with best communication practices, we have to reconsider our style choices from time to time. This update to the style guide was a collaborative effort between the EIA editors and a working group of EIA writers. We invited this working group to join us in considering EIA style because we wanted style decisions to make sense in the energy context.

The *EIA Writing Style Guide* is available on EIA.gov.

Guidelines versus hard-and-fast rules

The *EIA Writing Style Guide* is *not* a book of hard-and-fast grammar rules; it *is* guidance on clear communication and EIA-specific style choices.

Unlike grammar, which follows universal rules, style choices include topics such as how and when to write out numbers or when to use ending punctuation for bullets.

Following uniform style preferences enhances credibility and shows users that EIA has high-quality standards for both our words and our numbers.

Establishing EIA style

Our goal was to find balance—between consistency and flexibility and between a conversational tone and industry language. To achieve this balance, we formed a working group of subject matter experts who are also writers and reviewers. We worked together to identify six guiding principles for this style guide. When making style decisions, we asked ourselves:

Is this guidance…	Does this guidance…
Essential	Match energy industry language
Needlessly restrictive	Improve clarity
Concise and clear	Promote a modern, conversational tone

Resources

We used three resources to inform our decisions:

- The *Chicago Manual of Style*
- *The Gregg Reference Manual*, 11th Edition
- *Merriam-Webster* dictionary

This style guide attempts to cover most of the questions that commonly arise in EIA writing. However, this guide is not intended to be a comprehensive writing or grammar manual. If you encounter questions that this guide does not answer, consult the source material above or contact the Office of Stakeholder Outreach and Communications editing team.

Changes to EIA style

We added content that answers questions from EIA staff and covers some new style choices. We also added more EIA-specific examples to show how our guidance applies to EIA writing. The five most significant changes to the style guide are:

1. Adjusted units of measure abbreviations
2. Changed source note language
3. Expanded list of policy neutral words and phrases
4. Added guidance on word usage
5. Updated formatting guidelines

Changes to EIA style

1

Writing Clearly

Writing clearly is a bit of an art form. Some of the decisions writers make are intuitive, not guided by a grammar rule. The Federal Plain Language Guidelines lay out the principles that define the writing style, but like our writing style guide, neither can possibly cover every situation. We address some common writing issues at EIA that compromise clarity. You will find most of this guidance in the federal guidelines, but some are style choices EIA has adopted in the spirit of ensuring our writing is clear and simply written.

EIA style is not only clear, but it also reflects the modern language of today's energy industry. Although we prefer a more conversational style, the tone should be at a suitable level of formality for a federal agency.

1. Consider your audience

- Anticipate and answer your readers' questions.
- Identify your largest audience before you begin writing. Think about what they may already know and what they will want to know about your topic.
- Write to your primary audience when writing for an audience with varying degrees of expertise, and provide background information through hyperlinks or short parenthetical descriptions to accommodate the part of your audience with less expertise. While planning and drafting your content, consider:
  - Their level of technical expertise
  - Their depth of interest
  - The tasks they will perform with the information you provide
- The 2022 EIA website customer survey showed that 29% of our customers are first-time visitors, 25% do not live in the United States, and 22% identify themselves as *energy experts*. Each year, this survey produces similar results.

2. Put the Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF)

- Start with your main message so your readers can quickly get the most important information and then decide if they want to read more.
- Organize your content so the information appears in order of importance, from the highest level to supporting details.
- Present the familiar content first and move to new concepts later in the sentence or paragraph structure.

3. Use short sentences

- Aim for a maximum of 15 to 20 words. Short sentences are easier to read.
- Consider breaking a long sentence into two shorter sentences.
- Eliminate unnecessary words.

4. Use short paragraphs

- Avoid long paragraphs or large blocks of text. Long paragraphs are difficult for readers to scan.
- Try to write paragraphs of four or five sentences or about 75–100 words. Paragraphs as short as one sentence are fine.
- Use bullets for a list with more than three items.

5. Choose active over passive voice

- Use active voice most of the time.

- In active-voice sentences, the doer of the action comes first.

- In passive-voice sentences, the doer of the action comes last.
  Passive-voice sentences often leave out the person or group responsible for the action (also known as *cut passive*).

  Examples
  Active voice: The agency proposed new regulations.
  Active voice: EIA projects that oil production will increase.

  Passive voice: New regulations were proposed.
  Passive voice: Oil production is projected to increase.

- Use passive voice sparingly. You can use passive voice occasionally for specific purposes:

  – When the *object of the action* is your emphasis (You may also want to use this style in headlines.)

    Examples
    Emissions guidelines were issued by the California Air Resources Board in 1990.
    New Conservation Guidelines Are Adopted by the Legislature

  – When the person or entity taking the action is unimportant or unknown

    Example
    Stringent emissions guidelines were issued in 1990.

6. Use parallel structure

- Sentences should be parallel.

  Examples
  Parallel: Natural gas was transported via pipelines and tankers.
  Not parallel: Natural gas was transported via pipelines and tanker deliveries.

- Phrases and terms should be parallel.

  Examples
  Parallel: Natural gas imports and crude oil imports
  Not parallel: Natural gas imports and imports of crude oil

- Verb tense should be parallel unless you want to indicate a clear shift in timing.

  Examples
  Parallel: Smaller coal mines *have had* greater difficulty competing in the current market and *have been* the first to close.

  Clear shift in timing: FERC adopted the regulations in 2010, and they will be up for review in 2020.

- Bullets, numbered lists, or lists in a sentence must start with the same kind of word (noun, verb, adjective, etc.), and all must be either phrases or complete sentences.

  Examples
  Parallel: The project director is a strong leader, a skillful politician, and an effective manager.
  Not parallel: The project director is a strong leader, a skillful politician, and he manages effectively.

Parallel lists:
- Educat*ing* the public
- Inform*ing* the media
- Updat*ing* decision makers

- Conduct*ed* a survey
- Comput*ed* the results
- Prepar*ed* a report

7. Avoid jargon

- Choose nontechnical terms as much as possible. EIA's content is accessible to a wide range of readers, from experts on your topic to novices.

- Explain the term simply if you must use jargon or technical language.

- Provide an example or an analogy.

- Define terms you think a nonstatistical, nonscientific reader might not understand. You can provide definitions by adding:

  – Explanatory words either in the sentence or in parentheses
  – A note at the bottom of a graph
  – A footnote or endnote
  – A link to the EIA Glossary, additional EIA material, or outside source

- Link the term, phrase, or report name itself rather than writing *click here.*

  Example
  The full *Short-Term Energy Outlook* is available on EIA.gov.

8. Be consistent

Good writing is built on patterns, so be consistent within your content. For example, don't call it *gasoline* in some instances and *motor gasoline* or *gas* in others.

- Consistent terminology

- Consistent grammatical structure

- Consistent parallel structure for headings and lists

9. Make your writing reader friendly

When faced with a choice, always err on the side of clarity.

- Don't omit words in a proper noun to make the term shorter.

  – Include all the words in a noun to be clear.

    Examples
    Clear: Central America and South America
    Unclear: Central and South America

    Clear: North Dakota and South Dakota
    Unclear: North and South Dakota

- Don't use parenthetical plurals in text or in labels and headings, such as *entity(ies)*, *agency(ies)*, or *form(s)*.

  – Use the plural form when the possibility of one or more exists. In text, subject-verb agreement becomes a problem when you use a parenthetical plural. In labels, the parentheses are not reader friendly. Readers will understand the implied singular.

    Examples
    S-V agree: Reporting forms are due on the first of every month.
    S-V problem: Reporting form(s) [is/are] due on the first of every month.
    Reader friendly: Oil wells drilled in 2020
    Clunky: Oil well(s) drilled in 2020

- Don't use *and/or*. Pick one or the other.
  - Use either *and* or *or* for greater clarity. Most of the time you mean either *or* or *and* but not both. Choose the one that best fits the context. If you need both words, add *or both*.

    Examples
    Less clear:
    Power plants in the United States most commonly use coal and/or natural gas as fuel.
    More clear:
    Power plants in the United States most commonly use coal or natural gas as a fuel.
    Power plants in the United States most commonly use coal and natural gas as a fuel.
    Power plants in the United States most commonly use coal or natural gas, or both, as a fuel.

- Don't use *with* to link ideas or sentences.
  - Use a coordinating conjunction or other appropriate descriptive word to join ideas or sentences. Use *with* to show someone or something is *accompanied by* or *in possession of*.

    Examples
    Concise: Oil production rose in the third quarter and reached a record high.
    Less concise: Oil production rose in the third quarter, with levels reaching a record high.

- Don't string together more than three modifiers with a noun because the noun can easily get lost.
  - Use modifiers sparingly to avoid confusing your reader.

    Examples
    Clear: Annual totals for electric power generated from natural gas
    Unclear: Annual natural gas-fired electric power generation totals

- Don't use false subjects.
  - Sentences that begin with *this, that, it, or there* followed by a form of *to be* can confuse readers because readers have to look for the subject in the previous sentence.
  - False subjects:

    | This is | There is | There was | It is |
    | That is | There are | There were | It was |

    Examples
    Clear: This **change** is the result of a new law.
    Unclear: This is because of a new law.

    Clear: The **increase in demand** is the result of hotter weather.
    Unclear: It is a result of hotter weather.

    Clear: Oil prices are rising because demand is up and supplies are low. This **low supply** is the result of pipeline constraints and decreased imports.
    Unclear: Oil prices are rising because demand is up and supplies are low. This is the result of pipeline constraints and decreased imports.
    (This what? *This* could refer back to rising prices, increased demand, or low supplies.)

10. Make your writing conversational
The formality of your writing depends on both content and audience.

- Use the pronoun *we* instead of *EIA* once you establish that EIA is the actor.

Examples
Informal: We project oil production to increase.
Formal: EIA projects oil production to increase.

- Use contractions.

Examples
Informal: The January STEO forecasts that oil production won't increase next year.
Formal: The January STEO forecasts that oil production will not increase next year.

- Use *must* for requirements.

Examples
Informal: In the AEO2023 Reference case, all coal-fired power plants with heat rate improvement options must begin these projects or retire by 2025.
Formal: In the AEO2023 Reference case, all coal-fired power plants with heat rate improvement options are mandated to begin these projects or retire by 2025.

- Use the simplest word (You can find examples in Sections 11, 12, and 13).

- Avoid colloquial words or expressions to avoid the risk of making your writing too informal.

Examples
Informal: Natural gas has *the upper hand* in fueling power plants
Formal: Natural gas surpasses coal as the prominent fuel source for power plants

Informal: OPEC *kicks the can* on production cuts this year
Formal: OPEC delays a decision on production cuts this year

- Don't use personification, which means to attribute human characteristics, behaviors, or emotions to inanimate objects or abstract ideas.

Examples
Do this: Gasoline prices increased $2.00/gal in 2022.
Not this: Gasoline prices experienced a $2.00/gal increase in 2022.
Not this: Gasoline prices saw an increase of $2.00/gal in 2022.

11. Use strong verbs instead of noun phrases

Eliminating unnecessary words makes your writing stronger and your sentences shorter. This list provides some examples of how to simplify a noun phrase.

Don't use this	Use this
Afford an opportunity	Allow
Come to an agreement on	Agree
Demonstrate a preference for	Prefer
Give approval for	Approve
In violation of	Violate
Is able to	Can
Make a choice	Choose
Make a decision	Decide
Present a summary of	Summarize
Perform an analysis	Analyze

12. Avoid redundancies

Don't weigh your writing down with unnecessary modifiers. This list provides some examples of modifiers we don't need.

Don't use this	Use this
New record	Record
Originally began	Began
Completely destroyed	Destroyed
Final completion	Complete
Reason is because	Because
Close proximity	Close
Continue to remain	Continue or remain
Throughout the entire	Throughout

13. Use hyperlinks to provide background information

- Use links to provide related content such as glossaries, tables, reports, and graphics.

- Use links sparingly throughout a report. Too many links makes the text hard to read.

  Examples

  In 2020, EIA expects the United States to export about 20% of the petroleum produced domestically. Table 4, U.S. energy consumption, provides usage data by state.

  You can find more information in the March 2020 *Short-Term Energy Outlook.*

- Stand-alone links are menu links or links at the beginning or end of a section, such as the *Learn more* links added to *Energy Explained* articles.

  Example

  ### Learn more

  U.S. Department of Energy Office of Nuclear Energy ⬀

  Nuclear Chain Reaction Model ⬀

  Explaining nuclear energy for kids ⬀

  Articles on nuclear energy

- Hyperlink enough of the text to be clear about what the link is going to.

  Examples
  Clear: Diablo Canyon Unit 2 was taken offline on April 27.
  Clear: The company presented the *Integrated Performance Plan* in response to the flooding.
  Unclear: The company presented the *Integrated Performance Plan* in response to the flooding.
  Unclear: Diablo Canyon Unit 2 was taken offline on April 27.

- Never use *click here* or *click here* or *see here* as a link. Don't use language that directs readers to take action to see a linked page.

- Don't underline links.

- The link to a publication should match the title of the publication.

- Hyperlink to landing pages rather than specific documents. For example, always link to www.eia.gov/steo rather than to the STEO PDF (unless you are directing readers to a specific archived report).

- Don't include full URLs in PDFs.

14. Avoid bureaucratic language

Use simple and specific words—not bureaucratic, clichéd, or wordy expressions. This list provides some examples of how your word choice makes your writing more conversational.

Bureaucratic or wordy	Simple and specific
accordingly	so
aforementioned	as mentioned
additionally	also, in addition
as to whether	whether
at the present time, at this point in time	now
at the time that	when
burgeoning	growing, increasing
by means of	with, in, by
capability	ability, can
cease	stop
commence	start, begin
comprise	consists of
compose	makes up
consequently	so
currently	now
due to the fact that	because
during the course of	during
endeavor to	try to
equally as	equally
equivalent	equal
facilitate	help
finalize	finish
for the most part	mostly
for the purpose of	for, to
furthermore	also, in addition
identical	same
in accordance with	by, following, under
incentivizing	promoting, encouraging
including, but not limited to	including
indices	indexes
initial	first
initiate	start

in order to	to
in spite of the fact that/of	although, despite
in the event that	if
in the month of January	in January
in the near future	soon
in the vicinity of	near
it is felt that	(omit)
kind of	rather
leverage	use, take advantage of
limited number	few, some
magnitude	size
mandate	require
mitigate	reduce
myriad	many
no later than	by, for
numerous	many
on a monthly/weekly/annual basis	monthly/weekly/annually
on or before December 2	by December 2
on the basis of	based on
on the part of	by
optimum	best
preeminent	primary, major
regarding	about, of, on
retain	keep
since the time when	since
subsequent (to)	next/after
sufficient	enough
sunset	end
terminate	end, stop
the question as to whether	whether
therefore	so
the reason why is that	because
the table is a list of	the table shows
thus	so
time frame	time or period
time period	time or period
underutilized	underused
until such time as	until
upon	on
usage of	use of
used for fuel purposes	used for fuel

utilize	use (except with refinery, pipeline, or power plant capacity)
whether or not	whether
with regard to	about
with the exception of	except
would appear that	appears

2

Neutrality

EIA's responsibility is to provide independent, policy-neutral information. We don't advocate or support policies, industries, fuels, or trends.

You may find it challenging to find a balance between telling the story clearly and maintaining neutral language. When this happens, use active, clear language to describe what is going on and flag the language that concerns you for reviewers.

Sometimes our writing may seem repetitive. Often, verbs or adverbs have subtle or not-so-subtle connotations, either positive or negative. When you are choosing your verbs or adverbs, be sure to consider this aspect.

1. Use policy-neutral words

When choosing your words, avoid using adjectives when possible. Let the data speak for itself.

Examples

Neutral: Last winter, natural gas demand grew 34.5 Bcf/d compared with 16.0 Bcf/d the previous winter.

Not neutral: Last winter, natural gas demand growth was strong compared with the previous year.

Neutral: prices fell
Not neutral: prices plummeted

Neutral: production decreased, production dropped
Not neutral: production was slashed

Neutral: Hydraulic fracturing requires large amounts of water.
Not neutral: Hydraulic fracturing requires huge amounts of water.

Neutral: Natural gas production reversed its downward trend.
Not neutral: Natural gas production finally reversed its downward trend.

2. Avoid these phrases

Use descriptive language where appropriate, but avoid these words and phrases. A 50% increase may seem to be *surging* or *skyrocketing*, but let readers form their own opinions.

Examples

Appropriate action	Jumped	Slashed	Consequently
Burgeoning	Massive	Soared	Dependent on
Effective policy	Obvious solution	Surging	Supported by
Enormous	Rebound	Tiny	Recovered
Huge	Skyrocketed		

3. Watch for these common situations that may test policy neutrality

- Rising or falling prices

  – To a consumer, rising prices are usually negative, and falling prices are usually positive. An energy producer may have the opposite perspective. EIA reports the trends with neutral words to avoid seeming like we are on one side or the other.

- Dependence on oil (or any fuel) imports from other countries

  – The term oil dependence inevitably leads to discussions about energy independence. Instead of dependence, use terms such as *use of foreign oil* or *imported oil as a share of U.S. oil consumption.*

- Environmental impacts of energy production and consumption

  – EIA can discuss impacts and list what they are, but we should not use judgmental or advocacy words.

- Policies that support or do not support a fuel technology

  – Avoid appearing like a cheering section for a tool or technology. Just state the facts.

3

Common Grammatical Errors

1. *Which* and *that*

- *Which* and *that* are not interchangeable.
- *Which* is a pronoun that introduces nonessential information. Use a comma before a *which* clause.
- *That* is a pronoun used to introduce essential information. Don't use a comma before a *that* clause.

  Examples
  Power plants that burn fossil fuels emit pollutants. (Specifically, the plants that burn fossil fuels.)
  Power plants, which are one source of electric power, may emit pollutants.
  (In general, power plants are one source of electric power.)

- In many cases, you don't need to include *that*. Omit *that* where it doesn't introduce a dependent clause that modifies a clause or noun. The primary thing to remember is if the sentence makes sense without *that*, leave it out.

  Example
  EIA forecasts [that] the price of a barrel of oil will go down in 2021.

2. Possessives

- In the following examples, the nuclear plants don't belong to the State of Texas; they are located in Texas. Although not everyone would assume the State of Texas owns the plants, we strive to avoid ambiguity. In addition, we want our writing to be specific and introduce the most important information first.

  Clear: In Texas, the two operating nuclear power plants supplied 8% of the state's net electricity generation in 2022.

  Less clear: Texas's two operating nuclear power plants supplied 8% of the state's net electricity generation in 2022.

- Countries and states used as adjectives should only modify government.

  Example: The Chinese government suspended China's exports.

  Examples
  Do this: Colombia's oil production (sounds like the country)
  Not this: Columbian oil production (sounds like a type of oil)

- When writing a singular noun that ends in *s*, use apostrophe *s* ('s).

  Examples
  Kansas's legislature
  Your boss's approval
  Natural gas's share

- When writing a plural noun that ends in *s*, use only an apostrophe.

  Example
  Renewables' share

- Place names ending in a plural noun that ends in *s* only require an apostrophe.

  Example
  The United States' policy (*states* is a plural noun that ends in *s*)

3. Pronouns

Countries, companies, or ships

- Use *it* when referring to companies, countries, or ships.

  Examples
  Mexico imports most of *its* natural gas.
  The Long Range ship is used globally because of *its* ability to access most large ports.

Singular *they*

Use *they* as a plural pronoun, never singular. *Chicago* offers several ways to make your writing gender neutral to avoid the awkward construction of *he or she*.

- Omit the pronoun.

  Examples
  Not this: The analyst will update the records once all power plants have transferred their monthly data *to her*.
  This: The analyst will update the records once all power plants have transferred their monthly data.

- Repeat the noun.

  Examples
  Not this: An EIA writer should be policy neutral to maintain *his or her* credibility.
  This: An EIA writer should be policy neutral to maintain credibility *as an EIA writer*.

- Use a plural antecedent.

  Examples
  Not this: *An EIA writer* should be policy neutral to maintain *his or her* credibility.
  This: *EIA writers* should be policy neutral to maintain *their* credibility.

- Use an article instead of a personal pronoun.

  Examples
  Not this: An EIA writer should always double check *his or her* data.
  This: An EIA writer should always double check *the* data.

- Use the relative pronoun *who* (works best when it replaces a personal pronoun that follows *if*).

  Examples
  Not this: Employers presume that if an applicant can't write well, *he* won't be a good employee.
  This: Employers presume that an applicant *who can't write well* won't be a good employee.

- Use the imperative mood.

  Examples
  Not this: *An EIA writer* must ensure the data *he or she* uses are accurate.
  This: Ensure the data in EIA writing are accurate.

Indefinite pronouns

Indefinite pronouns can be singular, plural, or both, depending on context.

Singular	Plural	Both
Each	Both	All
Every	Few	None
Either	Many	Any
Neither	Others	Some
One	Several	More
Another		Most
Much		Who, which, that

- Use a singular verb when *each* and *every* come before two or more subjects joined by *and*.

  Examples
  Every solar and wind facility has an annual operating budget.
  Each solar and wind facility submits a monthly report.

- Use a plural verb when *each* follows a plural subject.

  Example
  Coal and natural gas generation *each* have increased.

- For pronouns that can be either singular or plural, use a verb tense to match the noun that the pronoun references.

  Examples
  All of the analysis is complete.
  All of the reports are submitted.

- Use a singular verb to compare two singular subjects through *either...or* or *neither...nor.*

  Examples
  Neither my officemate nor I was planning to attend the conference.
  Either my officemate or my boss was the last person to leave.

- Use a plural verb to compare plural subjects through *either...or* or *neither...nor*.

  Example
  Neither the team leaders nor the team members agree with the data.

- Use a verb tense that matches the nearest subject when subjects are singular and plural.

  Examples
  Neither the team leader nor the team members agree with the data.
  Neither the team members nor the team leader agrees with the data.

4. Subject-verb agreement in tricky situations

Collective and mass nouns

- Collective and mass nouns represent a group or collection of people or things. Collective nouns are countable and mass nouns are non-countable.

- When a collective noun acts as a unit, use a singular verb. When a collective noun acts separately, use a plural verb.

  Examples
  EIA staff is presenting the IEO2021 at a press conference this afternoon.
  EIA staff are responsible for their own time and attendance records.

- A mass noun is non-countable because it is either abstract or refers to an aggregate of

people or things taken as an indeterminate whole, for example, *luggage*.

- The primary difference between mass nouns and collective nouns is that mass nouns almost never take indefinite articles and typically do not have plural forms.

  Example
  The data show increasing *evidence* (mass noun) that production will slow later this year.

- Base your plural or singular verb on the subject of the sentence and not on any intervening clauses.

  Examples
  The rig count for oil wells is at a record high.
  Regional prices for gasoline in the Midwest are at a record high.

- Use a plural verb with *data*

  Example: The *data* are preliminary.

- Use a singular verb with *data series* or *dataset*

  Example: Our *data series* dates back to 1973.

4

Word Usage

Commonly misused words	Definition and example	Definition and example
about/around/ approximately/roughly (used with numbers)	**about/around:** near to, close to. *About* is better for measurements (about 50 Bcf/d). **Example** Nuclear power plants currently operate at *about* 92% of capacity, but the average capacity factor in the past five years has been 92.4%. *Around* is preferred for dates (around 2020). *Around* is preferred for estimating but too informal for rounding. *Around* is better for geography and time. **Example** Drilling a natural gas well on land may require clearing and leveling an area *around* the well site. Large-scale natural gas production from shale began *around* 2000, when shale gas production became a commercial reality in the Barnett Shale located in North Central Texas.	**approximately:** nearly accurate or exact. *About* does not convey the closeness to accuracy that *approximately* does. Use *approximately* when rounding. **roughly:** lack gentleness or refinement. *Roughly* is too informal for EIA writing.
Account for/make up/ compose/comprise	**account for:** to form a part of something. Comprise is too formal for EIA writing. **Example** Natural gas accounts for [comprises] 50% of fossil fuel consumption.	**make up:** to form by fitting together or assembling. Compose is too formal for EIA writing. **Example** OPEC's membership is made up [composed] of 12 countries.

Commonly misused words	Definition and example	Definition and example
affect/effect	**affect:** to influence.	**effect:** a result (as a noun); to bring about, to accomplish (as a verb).
	Example The hurricane affected five states.	**Example** The effects of the hurricane included widespread power outages and flooding.
although/though/while	**although:** in spite of the fact that, even though.	**while:** at the same time.
	Though is too formal for EIA writing.	*While* when you mean *although* is less clear and less reader friendly.
	Use *although* when you want to emphasize a contrast.	Use *while* to signal that you are talking about time.
	Example Although many of these dams have hydroelectric generators, only a small number were built only for hydropower generation.	**Example** Between 2005 and 2017, total U.S. electricity generation increased by almost 4% while related CO_2 emissions fell by 27%.
alternate/alternative	**alternate:** to change back and forth; every other one in a series.	**alternative:** a choice between different options.
	Example The power plant alternates between using renewable sources of generation and natural gas.	**Example** EIA considered three alternative methods `for collecting data.

Commonly misused words	Definition and example	Definition and example
because/as	**because:** cause and effect; for that reason.	**as:** indicates events are occurring at the same time.
	Example Oil production is decreasing because crude oil storage levels are at an all-time high.	**Example** Oil production has decreased as storage levels have risen.
because/since	**because:** cause and effect; for that reason.	**since:** from a certain time.
	Use *because* when writing about a reason.	*Since* can indicate a range in time and a cause and effect, so use *since* when writing about time to eliminate confusion.
	Example Oil production is decreasing because crude oil storage levels are at an all-time high.	**Example** Oil production has been decreasing since the first half of 2020.
because (of)/due to	**because:** for that reason (why something happened—the cause).	**because of/due to:** as a result of (the resulting action—the effect).
	Generally, *because* is followed by a subject and verb.	Generally, *due to* follows a form of the verb to be (is, are, was, were) and is followed by a noun or noun phrase. *Due to* and *because of* are interchangeable.
	Example Production increased [why?] because exploration increased.	**Example** Increased production was [the result of] due to increased exploration.
between/among	**between:** connecting or comparing two objects.	**among:** in or into the midst of; connecting or comparing more than two objects.
	Example A strong relationship exists between GDP growth rates and growth in oil consumption in non-OECD countries.	**Example** Illinois is the third-largest net electricity exporter among the states.

Commonly misused words	Definition and example	Definition and example
big/large/top	**big:** often countable (more colloquial/common) but can also refer to something serious. *Big* is generally too informal for EIA writing when *large* works as a substitute.	**large:** related to objects that are quantifiable or their physical size. Large price increase, largest nuclear reactor, largest decrease **top:** The highest point or level.
	Examples Big changes, big news, big challenges	**Examples** Top producer, top 10 producers, top exporter
compare to/compare with	**compare to:** to note similarities between things.	**compare with:** to note both similarities and differences between things.
	Example EIA compared the forecast growth in natural gas consumption in 2015 to the growth seen in 2015. (The growth is similar.)	**Example** Compared with 2015, growth in natural gas consumption in 2025 will be significant. (The growth is different.)
comprise/compose These words are not commonly used, and EIA preference is to use simpler, more conversational words.	**comprise**: to contain or consist of; the whole comprises the sum of its parts. Something is never *comprised of* something else. The whole comes before the parts.	**composed of:** to make up; to form by putting together. The part comes before the whole.
	Examples OPEC's membership consists of/is made up of [comprises] 12 countries. OPEC has 12 member countries. (You can also change the word.)	**Example** Twelve countries make up [compose] OPEC membership.

Commonly misused words	Definition and example	Definition and example
different from/ different than	**Different from:** requires a noun or pronoun to follow. **Example** My ideas are different from your ideas [pronoun + noun].	**Different than**: requires a clause to follow. **Example** My ideas are different than what they were 10 years ago [clause].
economic/economical	**economic:** refers to economics. **Example** Economic factors affect market volatility.	**economical:** thrifty; refers to the careful, efficient, and prudent use of resources. **Example** Renewable energy is becoming more economical because related capital costs are decreasing.
historic/historical	**historic:** famous; important in history. **Example** In 2014, Burlington, Vermont, marked a historic moment: Burlington was the first city in the United States to run 100% on renewable energy.	**historical:** of, belonging to, or referring to history. **Example** This table shows the weekly volumes of natural gas in storage along with historical comparisons.
impact/affect	**impact:** an effect, used only as a noun. Don't use impact as a verb. Use *affect* or *influence*. **Example** Florida felt the full impact of the hurricane.	**affect:** to produce an effect on. **Example** Warmer-than-normal weather affected the price of natural gas.
Like/such as	**like:** similar to. **Example** Like natural gas, coal in the Southwest Power Pool is cycled to accommodate wind power.	**such as:** for example. **Example** Biofuels, such as ethanol and biodiesel, contributed about 5% of total U.S. transportation sector energy use.

Commonly misused words	Definition and example	Definition and example
mainly/primarily/mostly	Use *mainly* when referencing the chief part or the essential point. Use *primarily* when referencing the first, initial, or original point.	Use *mostly* when referencing a share over 50%.
majority of/most of	**majority of:** only refers to a (countable) number of things or people. **Example** The majority of individual commercial buildings have their own heating and cooling systems.	**most of:** when writing about a noncountable amount. **Example** Most crude oil is refined into petroleum products used for transportation.
previous/prior	**previous:** an *event* occurring before the one being referenced. *Prior* as a modifier is too formal for EIA writing. Use *previous* or *last*. **Examples** **Less formal:** In our previous report, we forecast renewable generation to grow. **Formal:** In our prior report, we forecast renewable generation to grow.	**prior to:** a *time* occurring before the one being referenced. **Example** Prior to 2010, coal-fired electric generation was more prevalent than natural gas-fired generation.
proved/proven (reserves)	**proved reserves:** Term used in EIA reports referring to reserves of energy sources.	**proven reserves:** term referring to reserves of energy sources, but not EIA style.
upon/on	**upon:** more formal term for *on*.	**on:** less formal than upon. If the word *on* works in the sentence, use *on*.

5

Capitalization

1. Capitalizing (or not) words and terms frequently used at EIA

A   the administration (the Kennedy administration)
Appalachia region
Appalachian Basin
Appalachian (adjective)
the Arctic (when referring to the region)
autumn

B   bachelor's degree

C   central time
Central America
central (states)
census region, census division
Congress
congressional committee or report
the continental United States

D   U.S. Department of Energy

E   earth (except when referred to as the proper name)
east (compass point)
the East Coast
the East
Eastern Hemisphere
eastern time
eastern United States
email
email list (Listserv is a protected trademark that EIA may not use)
ENERGY STAR
the equator
euro
ExxonMobil (one word)

F   fall
federal
federal government
federal law
federal report
Federal Offshore Gulf of Mexico
Federal Register Notice
Federal Reserve Board

Federal Trade Commission
Forrestal Building

G   governor
gross domestic product
Gulf Coast
Gulf of Mexico

H   homepage

I   internet
intranet
investment tax credit

L   Lower 48 states

M   master's degree
mid-Atlantic
Middle Atlantic
Middle East
the Midwest
midwestern states
mountain time

N   the nation
New England
New York Harbor
the North
north (compass point)
northeastern states
the Northeast
North Sea
North Sea Brent
Northern California
Northern Hemisphere
northern New Mexico
NYMEX futures

O   Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

the Organization of the Petroleum
Exporting Countries

P   the Pacific Northwest
Pacific time
the Persian Gulf
production tax credit

R   renewable fuel standard (unless it's a
specific state or federal Renewable Fuel
Standard program)
renewable portfolio standard
Rocky Mountains

S   south (compass point)
the South
the Southeast
the Southwest
Southern California
southern United States
Southern Hemisphere
spring
state
state energy policy
summer

T   the territories

W   web page
webcast
webinar
website
west (compass point)
Western Hemisphere
western
the West Coast
the West
winter

2. Capitalizing EIA organization names and titles

Capitalize names of specific offices and teams. Do not capitalize organization names in generic, nonspecific references.

Examples

Office of Stakeholder Outreach and Communications
Petroleum Marketing Statistics Team
Joe Smith, Content Operations Team Leader
Jane Smith, Assistant Administrator, Office of Energy Statistics

Each week, you must meet with your office director.
EIA has many team leaders.

3. Capitalizing geographic locations

Basins and plays

- Capitalize basin when it is part of a proper noun (such as the formal name of the basin). Use lowercase letters when referring to a basin in general.

   Examples
   Permian Basin production activities are located in both Texas and New Mexico.
   The most prolific area for oil and associated gas production in this basin is the northeast section.

- *Play* is always lowercase, even when part of a formal name.

   Example
   This document outlines updated maps for the Utica shale play of the Appalachian Basin.

Census divisions and regions

- Capitalize *census* when part of a proper noun, such as the formal name for a division or region. Use lowercase when referring to a census region or census division in general.

   Examples
   Census 2020
   the census
   West Census Region
   the census division

Census Regions and Divisions
West Census Region
Pacific Census Division
Mountain Census Division
Midwest Census Region
West North Central Census Division
East North Central Census Division
Northeast Census Region
Middle Atlantic Census Division
New England Census Division
South Census Region
South Atlantic Census Division
East South Central Census Division
West South Central Census Division

Appalachia vs Appalachian

- Appalachia region

- Appalachian Basin

- Appalachian (adjective)

4. Capitalizing seasons

- Only capitalize seasons when they denote the issue of a journal.

6

Numbers

1. Numbers or numerals

- Write out numbers from zero through nine.

  - Exceptions: When the numbers refer to percentages (2%), time of day (4:00 p.m.), or units of measurement (3 inches, 9 miles, 1 MW, 5 Bcf/d), always use numerals.

    Examples
    The five renewable energy sources used most often are biomass, hydropower, geothermal, wind, and solar.
    The report is due in four months.

- Use numerals for numbers 10 and higher.

  Example
  In this report, the U.S. Energy Information Administration presents 10 major energy trends.

- The same rule applies to ordinal numbers (a number indicating rank).

  Example
  As of January 2015, Louisiana ranked 15th in nuclear capacity.

- Use numerals for each number when two or more numbers in the same category appear in a sentence and one of them is 10 or higher.

  - For numbers in different categories, treat each number independently of the other numbers. In other words, write out numbers lower than 10.
  - The same rule applies to ordinal numbers.

    Examples
    We conducted evaluations of 8 of the 16 geothermal sites.
    The data cover 20 states and five regions.
    China ranked 5th and India ranked 12th in global coal production.

- Write out any number that begins a sentence or rearrange your sentence.

  Examples
  Twenty-two people came to the meeting.
  Thirty-one municipalities have proposed commercial nuclear power plants.
  Fifteen years later, production at the mine had increased.
  Production at the mine had increased 15 years later.

- Use superscript for ordinal numbers.

  Examples
  The power plant used 21st-century technology.
  Dr. DeCarolis is the 10th EIA Administrator.

  - You can also use subscript for chemical formulas.
    Example: We expect CO_2 emissions to decrease 12% by 2023.

- Use a numeral for any number that represents a value of a variable in an equation.

  Example
  $x = a + b$,
  where a may equal 1 or 5.

- Use numerals (not words) until 1 million.

- Use numerals to refer to a span of years.

  - Omit the first two digits of the second number if the two years are in the same century.
  - If you use punctuation instead of text, use an en dash, not a hyphen.
  - Don't mix text with punctuation. Use one or the other.

The model year 2005–07 standards
2000–2040 (2000 is the end of the 20th century, so use all four digits.)
FY 2000–FY 2016
FY 2017–20
between 1998 and 2016
from January 2010 through December 2015

- Use all four digits when referencing a specific year; don't omit the first two digits.

  Example
  New investment in clean energy sources increased in 2008.

- Write out a shortened form the first time you abbreviate a timeframe, and then be consistent throughout your document.

  Examples
  fourth quarter of 2019 (4Q19)
  first half of 2020 (1H20)
  fiscal year 2020 (FY 2020)

2. Numbers or numerals for fractions

- Write out simple fractions and use hyphens.

  Examples
  Three-fourths of the congressional members voted for the bill.
  The law passed by a two-thirds majority.

- Use numerals for mixed fractions.

  Example
  The 7½-inch pipeline crosses two states.

- Don't use th for fractions or dates.

  Example
  The survey is due on March 15.

- Write out the word *one* rather than use *a*.

  Example
  Crude oil production levels so far this year are one-quarter of last year's total.

- Use numerals in fractions that are followed by a unit of measurement.

  Example
  The coal beds are at least 1/3 miles apart.

- Use a percentage rather than a fraction for less common fractions to make it easier on your reader. For example, use a percentage rather than writing *1/8 of the population*.

3. The % sign

- Express percentages in numerals, and always use the % sign. Don't add a space between the symbol and the numeral.

  Examples
  In 2015, production rose by 3%.
  The oil price shocks result in a 25% rise in gasoline prices.

- No hyphen between the % sign and the noun when the percentage acts as an adjective.

  Example
  The price shock resulted in a 75% increase at the pump.

4. Ranges of numbers and adjacent numbers

- When writing a range, include the unit of measurement or % sign with both values. If a budget increase is written as $3-$4 million dollars, it could mean $3 to $4 million or $3 million to $4 million. State the units with each number to eliminate ambiguity.

  Examples
  Consumption rose 2% to 4% across four regions.
  The temperature ranged from 32°C to 40°C.

- Numbers close together in a sentence can make it harder to read.

  Too close:
  Too close: According to our *Quarterly Coal Report*, in 2020, 10% of all U.S. coal plants were retired.

  More readable: According to our *Quarterly Coal Report*, 33 coal plants retired in 2020, which is about 10% of all U.S. coal plants.

- When two numbers for two different things are next to each other, spell out the first number unless the second number would make a significantly shorter word.

  Examples
  The utility built ten 5-kW reactors.
  The pipeline was built in fifteen 10-mile stretches.
  The building used 500 sixty-watt bulbs in FY 2020.

5. Negative numbers and the minus sign

- When writing negative numbers, always use the minus sign (or hyphen).

  Example
  The temperature was -4°F.

- When writing about monetary decreases, put the minus sign before the dollar sign.

  Example
  -$1.17

- When writing a calculation, spell out the word *minus* rather than using the minus sign.

  Example
  The total was 30 minus 27.

6. Hyphens with numbers

- Use a hyphen when the number is a descriptor and a modifier.

  Examples
  24-inch ruler
  10-minute delay
  275-page book
  3-to-1 ratio
  18-year-old power plant
  over a 12-month period five-year plan
  three-week period

- Use a hyphen between the elements of a fraction.

  Examples
  two-thirds
  three-fourths

7. Numbers with currency

- Write out the word *cents* when writing about cents only. The ¢ symbol is okay for charts and tables.

  Example
  The price of gasoline went up 15 cents per gallon last week.

- Use the dollar sign instead of writing the word *dollars* for U.S. currency.

  Example
  The average coal-fired power plant costs $850 million to build.

- If adjusting for inflation, use 2012 dollars or 2012$, not $2012.

  Examples
  The price of gasoline was adjusted for inflation using 2012$.
  The price of gasoline was adjusted for inflation using 2012 dollars.

- When writing about international topics, specify the currency for monetary values. If you use the abbreviation, spell out the currency type the first time you use it, then use the abbreviation. You can also use the symbol or write out the currency type each time.

  Example
  Japan estimates it will cost Japanese yen (JPY) 5 trillion to decommission the reactor.
  Japan estimates it will cost 5 trillion yen to decommission the reactor.
  Japan estimates it will cost ¥5 trillion to decommission the reactor.

- If you use the dollar sign, use the abbreviation (minus the *d* for dollar) to indicate the currency.

  Example
  The average cost to build a natural gas-fired plant in the United States declined by US $10 million last year.

- If you use a currency symbol *other than the dollar sign*, (for example, the yen or the euro), omit the abbreviation for the currency type. You may also write out the currency type instead of using the symbol for currencies other than dollars.

Symbol	Spelled out	No Symbol
US $5 million	U.S. dollar (USD) 5 million	
AU $5 million	Australian dollar (AUD) 5 million	
CA $5 million	Canadian dollar (CAD) 5 million	
¥5 million	Japanese yen (JPY) 5 million	5 million yen
€5 million	Euro (EUR) 5 million	5 million euro

- Some examples of the most-used currencies in the world are listed below. The International Organization for Standardization has a complete list of currency names and abbreviations on its website, ISO4217.

Country	Currency name	Abbreviation
Australia	Australian dollar	AUD
Canada	Canadian dollar	CAD
China	Yuan renminbi	CNY
European Union (plus former colonies)	Euro	EUR
Japan	Yen	JPY
New Zealand	New Zealand dollar	NZD
The Russian Federation	Ruble	RUB
South Korea (Republic of Korea)	Won	KRW
Taiwan	New Taiwan dollar	TWD
United Kingdom	Pound sterling	GBP
United States (plus territories)	U.S. dollar	USD

8. Large numbers

- To make large numbers (beginning with million) easier to read, mix numerals and written-out units.

  Examples
  In December 2007, the United States exported more than *1.5 million* barrels per day of crude oil.
  The population is *3 billion* people.

9. Time

- Use numerals for exact times that are followed by *a.m.* or *p.m.*, and use periods in the abbreviation. In tables, you can leave off the minutes if you are marking only the hours.

  Examples
  CAISO's solar power output typically increases to about 9.1 gigawatts (GW) between 10:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Pacific time.
  9 p.m. (for tables only)

- Write out the words *noon* and *midnight*.

  Examples
  The market will run from 9:00 a.m. through noon.
  Electricity use dropped rapidly following the hurricane's landfall at about midnight on August 2.

10. Decimals and significant digits

- Use a zero before a decimal point if there is no value in the first place to the left of the decimal.

  Example
  The price fell by 0.2%.

- Use the same level of significant digits in a comparison or section.

  Example
  Consumption rose by 2.0% in February and by 3.2% in March.

11. Changes in values

- Be careful when writing that a value increased in terms of *fold*. If something goes from 1 to 4, that's a four-fold increase but a 300% increase. These calculations are not easy for readers to understand.
  In addition, percentages over 100% are hard for readers to understand. Use *doubled* or *tripled* or revert to absolute numbers. Write the change as a percentage or as X times larger or smaller if the percentage is more that 100%.

  Examples
  Possibly confusing
  Gasoline crack spreads increased by 130 times, from $0.01/gal to $1.30/gal.
  Gasoline prices tripled, and crude oil imports increased to 10 times the average.
  Construction increased four-fold between 2015 and 2016.

- Distinguish between percentage change and percentage point change.

  Example
  Retiring utilization dropped by 2 percentage points, from 48% to 50%.

- If you state a change in physical units and as a percentage, you must lead with the percentage and then use commas or parentheses to show you are restating the same change.

  Examples
  Production fell by 10%, or 6 million b/d, in 2014.
  Oil prices rose 25%, from $80 per barrel to $100 per barrel, between 2007 and 2008.
  Oil prices rose 25% (from $80 per barrel to $100 per barrel) between 2007 and 2008.

12. Verb tenses with numbers or groups

- Use a plural verb with *a number*, and use a singular verb with *the number*.

  Examples
  A small number of ULCC vessels are currently in use.
  A number of recently completed infrastructure projects will increase Marcellus and Utica takeaway capacity.
  The number of oil rigs is growing.
  The number of oil-producing wells in the United States increased from 729,000 wells in 2000 to a high of about 1.3 million wells in 2014.

- Use a plural verb with fractional expressions when a plural noun follows *of* or is implied. Use a singular verb if a singular noun follows *of* or is implied.

  Examples
  Plural noun/plural verb
  A majority of commercial *customers have* signed up with competitive suppliers.
  The rest of the non-OECD *countries account for* another 19% of the increase.

In the Midwest region, 50% of *generators use* natural gas.
Less than 20% of all *power plants are* coal-fired plants.

Singular noun/singular verb
In the United States, 30% of natural gas *production occurs* in Texas.
More than 50% of *electricity is* fueled by natural gas.
One-half of the world's crude *oil supply is* moved by tankers on maritime shipping routes.
A substantial portion of Congo's *power generation comes* from hydropower.

13. Writing about numbers

Percent versus *percentage*

- Use *percent* with a number (20%). Because EIA uses the % symbol, you will rarely use the word *percent*. Use the word *percentage* as the general noun or adjective.

  Examples
  Offshore wells produced nearly 16% of U.S. crude oil.
  To calculate T&D losses as a percentage, divide estimated losses by the result of total disposition minus direct use.
  The percentage change is calculated before rounding.

Less than versus *fewer than*

- Use *less* to refer to mass nouns (things you can't count individually) and *fewer* to refer to count nouns (things you can count individually).

- Use *less than* for periods of time, distance, amounts of money, quantities, and percentages.

  Examples
  A combined-cycle natural gas turbine plant requires significantly less space than coal-fired configurations.
  Even with fewer wells, U.S. oil production grew to 9.3 million b/d in 2017.
  Less than 10% of all plant operators failed to respond to the annual survey.
  Less than half of the region's customers were without power.
  Less than 10 years ago, the United States had more coal-fired than natural gas-fired power plants.

- *Expected* and *forecast* are not interchangeable with *projected*. Use the following definitions to determine which is appropriate for your document. Be sure to use active voice and identify whether the projection or forecast is coming from EIA or another source.

  - Expected or forecast (to be): Estimates of what is expected or forecast to happen, given historical trends, recent data, and specific assumptions.

    Examples
    EIA forecast: *Short-Term Energy Outlook*
    According to the STEO, EIA forecasts that crude oil production will remain steady over the forecast period.

  - Projected (to be): Generally, projections by EIA are not statements of what will happen but of what might happen, given the assumptions and methodologies used for any particular scenario.
    Examples
    EIA projections: *Annual Energy Outlook, International Energy Outlook*
    The AEO2023 projects crude oil prices will remain steady over the projection period.

- Provide context for numbers.

Examples
In 2020, producers retired 33 coal plants.
In 2020, producers retired 33 coal plants, which is 10% of all coal plants in the United States.

14. Mathematical equations

A mathematical equation is either a sentence or a clause within a sentence. Mathematical symbols, however, are not plain English. Because sentences containing equations often include mathematical details, they may be longer and more complex than plain English sentences, and they may be formatted differently. Sentences with equations follow the same grammar, punctuation, and capitalization rules as sentences and clauses written in words.

Variable definitions may appear either before or after an equation. Each variable definition is itself an equation and should be punctuated either as a sentence or as an independent clause. Ending commas or semicolons are both correct.

Be sure to use a serif font such as Times New Roman that distinguishes between letters and numbers (for example, 1 and I) to avoid confusion. Use the Microsoft Word equation editor to guarantee clarity.

Example
Let $w_{j,t,l}$ be the weight of component model j, based on historical data up to and including year t, in the calculation of l-step-ahead projections, where $j = 1, \ldots, k$ and $l \geq 2$. For $j = 1, 2, \ldots, k - 1$, let

$$\eta_{j,l,t} = \log\left(\frac{w_{j,t,l}}{w_{k,t,l}}\right).$$

The inverse transforms are defined by

$$w_{j,t,l} = \frac{e^{\eta_{j,t,l}}}{1 + \sum_{j'=1}^{k-1} e^{\eta_{j',t,l}}}.$$

Example
The static regression model for the Mont Belvieu ethane price is

$$y_t = \beta_1 x_{1,t} + \beta_2 x_{2,t} + \beta_3 x_{3,t} + \varepsilon_t,$$

where

y_t = annual average Mont Belvieu ethane price (cents per gallon in 2011 dollars) in year t;
$x_{1,t}$ = ethane production (million barrels per day) in year t;
$x_{2,t}$ = total chemical demand (value of domestic shipments, in billions of 2005 dollars) in year t;
$x_{3,t}$ = annual average West Texas Intermediate crude oil price (2011 dollars per barrel) in year t; and
ε_t = a normally distributed random error term.

Sometimes a large number of variable definitions (for example, definitions for all variable names used in a document) are compiled into a data dictionary, which is formatted as a list or a table. In these cases, the style rules for lists or tables apply.

For more information on numbers, see *The Chicago Manual of Style*, Chapter 9: Numbers.

7

Punctuation

1. Commas

Items in a list

- Use commas to separate three or more items in a list.

  Example
  The pump price reflects the costs of refiners, marketers, distributors, and retail gas
  station owners.

- Use the serial comma between the last two items in a list. The serial comma helps add
  clarity.

  Examples
  Two mines, North Antelope Rochelle and Black Thunder, produced 22% of total U.S. coal
  production in 2018. (two mines)
  Two mines, North Antelope Rochelle, and Black Thunder produced 22% of total U.S. coal
  production in 2018. (four mines)
  Clear: Industrial consumption of natural gas, coal, biomass, and crude oil and petroleum
  products decreased last quarter. [clear that *crude oil and petroleum products* is one
  category]
  Unclear: Industrial consumption of natural gas, coal, biomass and crude oil and
  petroleum products decreased last quarter. [unclear if *crude oil* goes with *biomass* or
  petroleum products]

Introductory phrases

- Use a comma after introductory words, phrases, or clauses, particularly if they are long.

  Example
  After drafting the regulations, the agency called for comments.

Parenthetical or supplemental information

- Use commas to set off information that is an example, explanation, or citation. Do not
  use a comma if the information is essential to the meaning of the sentence.

  Examples
  EIA revised the data based on STEO.
  EIA forecasts production will increase this quarter, based on STEO.

Which and *that* phrases

- Use the word *which* when the text that follows provides more information but is not
  essential to the meaning of the sentence. Use the word *that* when the information that
  follows is essential to the meaning of the sentence.

- Use a comma before a clause that begins with *which*.

- Do not use a comma before *that*.

  Examples
  Power plants that burn fossil fuels emit pollutants.
  Power plants, which are a source of electric power, may emit pollutants.

For more information on using *which* and *that*, see Chapter 4, Commonly Misused Words.

Conjunctions and two complete sentences

- Use a comma when two *complete* sentences (also called independent clauses) are joined
  by a coordinating conjunction: *and, but, for, yet, so, nor,* and *or*.

Examples

Comma needed to separate clauses:
Bahrain is a minor producer of natural gas, and it consumes all of its natural gas output.
Coal market fundamentals have changed, yet spot prices remain stable.

No comma needed to separate clauses:
Bahrain is a minor producer of natural gas and consumes all of its natural gas output.
Coal market fundamentals have changed even though spot prices remain stable.

Dates

- Use a comma after the year when the *full date* appears in the text.

  Example
  Working natural gas in storage in the Lower 48 states as of October 31, 2017, totaled 3,784 Bcf.

- When the date acts as an adjective, try to rewrite to avoid the comma.

  Example
  Clear: The attack in Saudi Arabia on September 14, 2019, on crude oil infrastructure led to a small gasoline price increase across the United States.
  Awkward: The September 14, 2019, attack in Saudi Arabia on crude oil infrastructure led to a small gasoline price increase across the United States.

Place names

- When writing about a city or town, set off the state, territory, country, etc., with commas.

  Example
  The Rhine River connects the major refinery and petroleum trading centers of Antwerp, Belgium, with inland markets.

- When the place acts as an adjective, try to rewrite to avoid the comma.

  Example
  Clear: Crude oil storage levels at Cushing, Oklahoma, reached 54.4 million barrels on March 13.
  Awkward: Cushing, Oklahoma, crude oil storage levels reached 54.4 million barrels on March 13.

2. Hyphen (-), En dash (–), and Em dash (—)

- **Hyphens (-)** connect words for clarity. They are the shortest of the three dash lines.

  Examples
  short-term forecasts
  combined-cycle plant
  shut-in capacity

- **En dash (–)** shows a range from (something) to (something else), usually numbers or dates. You should be able to substitute the word *to* or *through* for an en dash. An en dash is longer than a hyphen but shorter than an em dash.

  Examples
  Consumption rose 2%–4%.
  Consumption rose between 2% and 4%.
  The projection period covers 2018–50.
  The projection period covers 2018 through 2050.

- **Em dash (—)** is twice as wide as a hyphen and serves the same purpose as commas, colons, or parentheses. Em dashes are often used in pairs. Use an em dash to indicate a sudden break or abrupt change in thought or to emphasize an idea. Also consider using em dashes rather than parentheses to set off examples or specific items.

  Examples
  EIA projects liquid fuel consumption to decline in 2016—a sharp reversal from previous projections.
  Three states—California, Texas, and New York—have high electricity prices.

- Do not leave blank spaces between hyphens or dashes and the surrounding text.

  Example
  Most—but not all—attendees were from EIA.

- **Typing an en dash:** You can insert it as a symbol in MS Word and MS Excel, you can press Ctrl+Minus, or you can type space+hyphen+space and MS Word will automatically convert the spaces and hyphen into an en dash.

- **Typing an em dash:** You can insert it as a symbol in MS Word and MS Excel, you can press Ctrl+Alt+Minus, or you can type two hyphens after a word and MS Word will automatically convert the two hyphens to an em dash.

3. Compound words and hyphens

- Hyphenate phrases when they describe a noun, but don't use a hyphen when a word acts as a noun.

  Examples

  The 2020 RECS reported that nearly 90% of U.S. homes use air conditioning.
  Of that 90%, about 66% of U.S. homes use central air-conditioning equipment.

near-term contract	in the near term
long-term forecast	in the long term
combined-cycle plant	The plant is combined cycle.
high-volume wells	The wells are high volume.
five-year period	a period of five years
second-largest producer	That producer is the second largest.
three-year-old power plant	The power plant is three years old.

- Don't use a hyphen in compound words when the meaning is clear without the hyphen and the hyphen will not aid readability.

  Examples
  bituminous coal industry
  child welfare plan
  civil rights case

- Capitalize both words in proper noun compounds.

  Example
  Short-Term Energy Outlook

- Use a dangling hyphen when two or more words have a common element and this element is omitted in all but the last term.

  Examples
  coal- and natural gas-fired generation (not natural-gas-fired generation)
  service- and technology-oriented business
  pro- and anti-competitive practices

long- and short-term forecasts
mid- to late 2000s

- Don't use a hyphen between two modifiers that precede a noun when one is an adverb that ends in -ly.

Examples
rapidly growing economy
frequently missed deadlines
heavily skewed results
competitively priced fuel

- Don't use a hyphen in a non-English phrase.

Examples
per capita consumption
ad hoc reports

4. Common prefix patterns

- Compounds formed with prefixes (pre, re, non, ex, anti, bi, co, mid, semi) are normally closed, with some exceptions.

- A hyphen is used with the prefixes listed above if the second part of the word begins with a capital letter: non-American, non-OPEC, sub-Saharan, pro-United States, ex-Marine.

- With frequent use, open or hyphenated compounds tend to become closed (e-mail to email, on-line to online), so if you're unsure, check a dictionary.

For more information on hyphens, check the *Merriam-Webster* dictionary.

5. Hyphen usage at EIA

A
aboveground utility
Asia Pacific region
air conditioning
air-conditioning equipment

B
baseload
belowground lines
bidirectional
breakeven prices
breakout (noun, adjective)
byproduct

C
coalbed (methane)
combined heat and power
combined-heat-and-power facility
coproducer

D
dataset
day-ahead price
decision makers
decision-making
degree days
draw down (verb)
drawdown (noun, adjective)

E
email

F
feedstocks
first-half 2020
first half of 2020
freeze-offs

H
homepage
hydropower
hydroelectric

I
intraregional
in-situ leach plants

L
lifecycle
light bulb
low-sulfur diesel

M
mid-1990s
midday
midsummer
mid-June
midcontinent
midweek
minemouth
multipurpose
multistage
multiyear

N
nonassociated
noncombustible
non-combustion
noncovered
noncrude oil
nonelectric
non-energy
nonfossil fuel
nonfuel
nonhighway
nonhydro
nonhydrocarbon
nonhydroelectric
nonliquid
nonmanufacturing
nonmetal
non-OECD
non-OPEC
nonpower
nonproducing
nonprofit
nonrenewable
nonsalt
nonscientific
nonshale oil
nonstatistical
nonutility

P
passenger-mile
preexisting
prerecession
preregister
presalt
pretax

R
re-export
reopen
run-up (noun)

S   seat mile
          subhourly
          subsalt
          systemwide

T   takeaway

U   ultra-low sulfur diesel

V   vehicle miles

W   web page
          website
          wellhead

6. Colons

- Colons introduce, list, or define something. A colon signals that what comes next is directly related to the previous sentence. The word following the colon is normally lowercase.

  Example
  The Utica play consists of two stacked geological units: the Utica formation and the Point Pleasant formation.

- You can use a colon to introduce a list if the introductory phrase is a complete sentence. Don't use a colon if the introductory phrase is not a complete sentence.

  Complete sentence
  Data are available in three reports: STEO, AEO, and IEO.
  Incomplete sentence
  Write sentences using commas, hyphens, and dashes. (No colon after the word *using*.)

7. Semicolons

Semicolons signal that two clauses are related, but each clause could stand on its own as a sentence. The word following the semicolon is normally lowercase. You can use a semicolon to:

- Join two independent clauses to emphasize a close relationship between the two.

  Example
  The report is on our website; you can download it.

- Join two independent clauses (sentences) with a transition word such as *therefore* or *however*.

  Example
  The price of the car is high; however, it includes taxes.

- Separate the items in a series when the items already include commas. When using a semicolon to separate list items, place the list appears at the end of the sentence.

  Example
  Our regional offices are in Miami, Florida; Chicago, Illinois; and Phoenix, Arizona.

8. Periods

- Place periods outside of the end parentheses at the end of a sentence.

    Example
    Twenty-one liquefied natural gas (LNG) vessels departed the United States this week (eight from Sabine Pass; four from Freeport; three from Corpus Christi; and two each from Cove Point, Elba Island, and Cameron).

- If the parentheses contain a complete sentence, place the period inside the parentheses.

    Example
    Most of the LNG vessels departed from Corpus Christi. (Only one departed from Sabine Pass.)

- Use only one space after the end punctuation (period or question mark, for example) between sentences.

9. Bracket sequence

Use nested parentheses or brackets sparingly in inline text, except in mathematical equations.

Example in text
(…[…]…)
U.S. electricity generation increased 19% from 2019 levels (or 4.17.kWh [kilowatthours]).

Example in mathematical equation
First level
[…(…)…]
Second level
{…[…(…)…]…}

8

Abbreviations and Units

1. Format for abbreviations and acronyms

- The first time you use an abbreviation or an acronym, spell it out and follow it with the abbreviation in parentheses unless it's on the list of commonly used acronyms and abbreviations at the end of this chapter.

- Italicize report names but not the abbreviation.

  Examples
  The new *Short-Term Energy Outlook* (STEO) is now available.
  STEO provides short-term energy forecasts.

- Don't include the abbreviation or acronym if you aren't going to use it again later in the text, unless it is on the list of acronyms and abbreviations that stand alone at EIA (Item 10).

- If you haven't used an acronym for several pages or you start a new chapter, spell out the acronym again.

- For more information on abbreviations, check:

  - EIA's list of energy-related abbreviations
  - *The Chicago Manual of Style*, Chapter 10: Abbreviations

2. EIA and DOE

Correct	Incorrect
EIA	the EIA
U.S. Energy Information Administration	the U.S. EIA
U.S. Department of Energy	U.S. DOE
DOE	the U.S. DOE

3. United States

- Spell out United States when you use it as a noun.

  Examples
  Temperatures vary across the United States.
  The United States imports coal primarily from Columbia, Canada, and Indonesia.

- Use the abbreviation *U.S.* when it's used as an adjective, such as when it precedes the name of a government organization or a domestic energy statistic.

  Example
  U.S. temperatures vary widely.

- Always use periods in *U.S.*

  Example
  U.S. oil production rose in 2015.

- Always spell out *United States* when it appears in a sentence or on a graph containing the names of other countries.

  Example
  Mexico's oil, United States' coal, and Canada's natural gas

4. Names of states and foreign countries

- Spell out the state name when it stands alone or when it follows the name of a city in running text.

The earthquake happened near San Francisco, California.

- Do not use postal codes—except for Washington, DC, where the postal code is part of the city's name—in text, tables, or graphics.
- Use postal codes in addresses and bibliographies.

5. The ampersand (&)

Never use the ampersand sign in EIA writing unless it is part of a proper name (*Oil & Gas Journal*) or phrase (R&D).

7. i.e. and e.g.

Spell out *i.e.* (that is, in other words, etc.) and *e.g.* (for example, such as, etc.) in EIA writing for improved readability.

8. Plural abbreviations

- Add an *s* to form a plural abbreviation, unless it's a unit of measurement.

Examples

FAQs	HGLs
FTEs	CFCs
LDCs	HDDs

- Treat acronyms as singular when used as an adjective.

Example
HGL production

9. Months of the year

- Spell out the months in text.
- Abbreviate the names of months followed by the day or day and year in footnotes, tables, and references where space is limited. You can find more information in Chapter 10.
- In tables, omit periods and write all months as three-letter abbreviations.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

10. Academic degrees

Do not use periods in abbreviations of academic degrees.

Examples
BA, BS, MA, MS, PhD

11. Abbreviations with units of measurement

- Use words with words and abbreviations with abbreviations.

Example
barrels per day or b/d, but not barrels/day

- Use the following abbreviations for timeframes in EIA writing:
  - d=day
  - y=year
  - h=hour

12. Abbreviations for units of measurement at EIA

A
AC: alternating current
AC/DC: alternating current/direct current

B
b: barrel
BOE: barrels of oil equivalent
B: billion
Bcf: billion cubic feet
Btu: British thermal units

C
cf: cubic feet
CO_2e: carbon dioxide equivalent
°C: degrees Celsius

D
DC: direct current
DWT: deadweight tons (vessel capacity)

E
E85: ethanol fuel 85% (applies to all ethanol blends)

F
°F: degrees Fahrenheit

G
gal: gallon
GW: gigawatt
GWe: gigawatt electric
GWt: gigawatt thermal
GWh: gigawatthour

K
K: kelvin (temperature scale)
kV: kilovolt
kW: kilowatt
kWh: kilowatthour

M
M: thousand
MM: million
mpg: miles per gallon
mt: metric ton
MW: megawatt
MWe: megawatt electric
MWt: megawatt thermal
MWh: megawatthours

P
ppm: parts per million

Q
quads: quadrillion British thermal units (quadrillion Btu)

R
rpm: revolutions per minute

S
st: short ton

T
T: trillion
TWh: terawatthours
Tcf: trillion cubic feet

Q
quads: quadrillion British thermal units, or quadrillion Btu

V
V: volt

W
W: watt
Wh: watthour

All unit abbreviations are assumed to be both singular and plural.

12. Common acronyms and abbreviations at EIA

API: application programming interface
API: American Petroleum Institute

CAFE: corporate average fuel economy
CAIR: Clean Air Interstate Rule
CAISO: California Independent System Operator
CDD: cooling degree day
CFL: compact fluorescent lighting
CHP: combined heat and power
CNG: compressed natural gas
CO_2: carbon dioxide

DC: District of Columbia

EIA: U.S. Energy Information Administration (never *the EIA*)
EU: European Union

FY: fiscal year

GDP: gross domestic product
GHG: greenhouse gas
GOM: Federal Offshore Gulf of Mexico

HDD: heating degree day
HGL: hydrocarbon gas liquids
H.R: abbreviation for a bill pending in the U.S. House of Representatives
    (for example, H.R. 1482)

ISO: Independent System Operator
ITC: investment tax credit

LDV: light-duty vehicle
LED: light-emitting diode
LPG: liquefied petroleum gas
LNG: liquefied natural gas

MY: model year

NGPL: natural gas plant liquids
NGL: natural gas liquids
N_2O: nitrous oxide
NO_x: nitrogen oxides (plural)
NYMEX: New York Mercantile Exchange

OECD: the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OPEC: the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries

PADD: Petroleum Administration for Defense District
PTC: production tax credit
PV: solar photovoltaic

RBOB: reformulated gasoline blendstock for oxygen blending
RFS: renewable fuel standard
RPS: renewable portfolio standard
RTO: regional transmission organization

S.: abbreviation for a bill pending in the U.S. Senate (for example, S. 1482)
SOx: sulfur oxides

UK: United Kingdom

VMT: vehicle miles traveled

WTI: West Texas Intermediate (crude oil)

13. Acronyms and abbreviations that stand alone at EIA

Sometimes the acronym is more recognizable than the spelled out words. When that happens, you don't need to spell out the acronym the first time you use it. The following list of acronyms don't have to be spelled out in EIA writing. If you think your audience may need help understanding the acronym, provide a link to a glossary definition or some other resource.

AC/DC: alternating/direct currents

API: application programming interface
API: American Petroleum Institute

°C: Celsius
CO_2: carbon dioxide

EIA: U.S. Energy Information Administration (never *the EIA*)
EU: European Union

°F: Fahrenheit

GDP: gross domestic product

H.R: abbreviation for a bill pending in the U.S. House of Representatives
     (for example, H.R. 1482)

IRS: Internal Revenue Service

LED: Light-emitting diode

NYMEX: New York Mercantile Exchange

OECD: the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OPEC: the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (includes non-OECD)
OPEC+: OPEC plus several additional countries

PADD: Petroleum Administration for Defense Districts
RBOB: reformulated gasoline blendstock for oxygen blending (*unleaded gasoline futures* is
     one way to spell out)

S.: abbreviation for a bill pending in the U.S. Senate (for example, S. 1482)

UK: United Kingdom

9

Lists and Bullets

Long paragraphs are difficult to read quickly. Bullets highlight your main points. To make it easier for readers to scan your content, use vertical lists rather than running text to present a series of related items or steps.

1. Types of list

- Use a bulleted list when the order of the items is not important and when the list is not about steps or procedures.
- Use numbered lists to indicate steps, sequence, or ranking.

2. Format for lists

- Introduce the list with a statement that clearly explains the items in the list.
- Use a colon at the end of the introductory statement.
- Capitalize the first word of each bullet, even if the listed items are not sentences.
- Wrap lines of each bullet under each other, not under the bullet point itself.

  Example
  The price consumers pay for heating oil can change for a variety of reasons:

  - Seasonal demand
  - Fluctuations in crude oil prices
  - Competition in local markets

- Begin each item with the same type of word (noun, verb, infinitive, etc.), and use the same grammatical form for each item (word, phrase, or sentence).

  Example
  To reduce natural gas bills, customers can do three things:

  - Check appliances for efficient operation.
  - Obtain an energy audit.
  - Reduce thermostat settings.

- Listed items require no end punctuation unless they are complete sentences, and complete sentences must be followed by a period. Do not use a comma or a semicolon at the end of each list item.
- When determining the order of the listed information, consider what order is most logical from a user's point of view. For example, lists can be ordered chronologically, step-by-step, by ranking, by most requested, by most important, etc.

  Example
  The top four requested reports on EIA.gov are:

  1. On-Highway Retail Diesel Prices
  2. Gasoline and Diesel Fuel Update
  3. Natural Gas Storage Report
  4. Weekly Natural Gas Storage Report

3. Lists without bullets or numbers

Provide a descriptive heading at the top of each list and don't use a colon.

Example
EIA Projections
Annual Energy Outlook
International Energy Outlook

10

Formatting Reports, Tables, and Graphs

EIA writers must provide full source information when they use content from other sources or references in EIA reports.

1. Sourcing nonoriginal work

You must credit all nonoriginal work with source citations. You can cite the work with footnotes, notes, hyperlinks, or inline text references, depending on the type of product. In general, the citation should include the author's name, the publication name, the publication date, and page number. Provide a hyperlink if you have one. Be mindful when linking to subscription services that are not available to non-subscription holders. Authors should consult the *Chicago Manual of Style* for more detailed guidance on source citations.

If you are uncertain about whether or not to include footnotes or endnotes, talk to your supervisor. Be aware of any reuse restrictions on third-party data. If you have questions, email thirdpartydata@eia.gov.

2. Understanding rights, permissions, copyright, and author's responsibilities

- EIA has a detailed policy on Using Third-Party Data in the Information Quality section of InsideEIA. The policy includes resources to help authors determine if information is protected by a copyright or license agreement and how to obtain permission or confirm that EIA has permission to use the material.

- Academic, journalistic, and government information that are not subject to copyright protections must be properly cited by EIA authors. Data from private vendors that EIA subscribes to and content found on the internet are often protected by copyright and require permission and citation under the terms of use agreement.

- Most websites have a *Copyright Notice* or *Terms of Service* link at the bottom of their homepage that defines republication rights. Always check the agency or company copyright policy. Authorizations are required for any copyrighted material, regardless of where you find it, including copyrighted information on publically accessible websites.

- When using third-party data to create data visualizations, cite only the data source. The presence of the EIA logo implies that we created the data visualization based either on our own data or on third-party data. If we use a third-party data visualization based on third-party data, then the absence of the EIA logo implies that neither the image nor the data belong to us.

  Example
  Data source: IHS Markit

- Spell out U.S. Energy Information Administration in source notations.

3. Using footnotes to explain, comment, or cite in documents, tables, or graphics

Footnotes in documents

- Generate footnotes using the auto generator in MS Word in the EIA report template.

- Use superscript numbers.

- Use running footnotes throughout the document. Don't restart the numbering at the end of a section. You should not reuse any footnote numbers within the document.

- Place footnote after the word or phrase it refers to or at the end of the sentence.

- Insert number with no space between the word or end punctuation and the number. If you have more than one footnote in a sentence, you can either insert each footnote next to the word or phrase it defines or insert all numbers after the period with commas separating the numbers ([1, 2, 3]).

The current values[1] for the average building lifetime and gamma vary by building type.[2]

---

[1] Table 2, *Floorspace attrition parameters*

[2] The commercial module performs attrition for 10 vintages of floorspace developed using stock estimates from the 2012 *Commercial Buildings Energy Consumption Survey*.

Footnotes in tables and graphs

- Below tables and graphs, put the data source, then notes, and then footnotes.
- Footnotes (as well as notes and sources) should be embedded in the image file so they print out as part of the graphic or table.
- Footnotes should appear beneath tables and graphs in Arial 9 point font.
- In data tables or visualizations, use letters to avoid confusion with the numbers in the table.

Lettered footnote example

Summary of oil prices 2014–15

	2014	2015
WTI crude[a] (per barrel)	$92.64	$93.81
Gasoline[b] (per gallon)	$3.59	$3.72

[a] West Texas Intermediate
[b] Average pump price for regular gasoline

4. Avoiding ibid in footnotes and endnotes

The term *ibid* (which in Latin means *same as above*, or *in the same place*) is sometimes used in footnotes, endnotes, and biographic references to save space. In EIA writing, refrain from using ibid. Use a shortened form of the reference instead.

5. Writing standards for tables

- Use the EIA preset table formatting in MS Excel and in MS Word. You can find more information on using the MS Excel and MS Word templates on InsideEIA.
- Numbered tables should start with *Table 1*.
- Don't use *above* and *below* when referring to numbered tables. Write *Table 1* or place the reference in parentheses.

Examples
The data on household electricity consumption are in Table 1.
Household electricity consumption increased in 2020 compared with the past 10 years (Table 1).

- Create a *Table of Tables* to follow the *Table of Figures*, if you have one, otherwise it should follow the *Table of Contents*.
- Read the footnote section in this chapter for footnote formatting guidance in tables.

- Use the following conventions to label empty cells in a table:

— (em dash)	no data reported
--	not applicable
NA	not available

- Use the following writing standards when creating your table:
  - Add a period after table numbers.
  - Use sentence case (only the first letter in the first word is capitalized) for table titles.
  - Write headings in sentence case.
  - Superscript table notes.
  - Spell out abbreviations.
  - For numbers, left justify the first column and right justify other columns.
  - For words, left justify all columns.
  - Indent subcategories two spaces from the main category heading in tables.

(A) (B) Table 1. U.S. total energy statistics, fourth-quarter 2018

	(C)
Total primary energy production (D)	**95.70 quadrillion British thermal units (Btu)**
By fuel/energy source	Share of total[a]
Natural gas	33%
Petroleum (crude oil and natural gas plant liquids)	30%
Coal	16%
Renewable	12%
Nuclear	9%
Total energy consumption[b] (E)	**101.25 quadrillion Btu**
By fuel/energy source	Share of total
Petroleum	36%
Natural gas	31%
Coal	13%
Renewable	11%
Nuclear	8%
By end-use sector	Share of total
Industrial	32%
Transportation	28%
Residential	21%
Commercial	18%

Data source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Energy Explained*, U.S. Total Energy Statistics **(F) (G)**
[a] Sum of shares may not equal 100% because of independent rounding.
[b] Includes primary energy consumption, retail electricity sales to the sector, and electrical system energy losses.

(A) Add period after table numbers.

(B) Use sentence case for table titles and black font.

(C) Spell out abbreviations.

(D) Write headings in sentence case.

(E) Superscript table notes.

(F) Italicize the names of EIA reports and products; don't italicize the names of customizable tools. So *Short-Term Energy Outlook*, *Residential Energy Consumption Survey*, and *Energy Explained*, but International Energy Statistics, U.S. State Energy Portal, and Short-Term Energy Outlook Data Browser.

(G) Add periods at the end of notes but not after sources.

6. Writing standards for graphs

- Use the EIA preset graph formatting and colors in MS Excel, which are preloaded on your computer. You can find more information on using the MS Excel templates on InsideEIA.

- Use the symbols for dollar signs and percent signs with each value on the x-axis and y-axis.

- Numbered graphs should start with *Figure 1*.

- Don't use *above* and *below* when referring to numbered graphs. Write *Figure 1* or place the reference in parentheses.

  Examples
  The data on household electricity consumption are in Figure 1.
  Household electricity consumption increased in 2020 compared with the past 10 years (Figure 1).

- You don't need to list the same source more than once when you are using more than one item from that source.

- When using third-party data to create a data visualization, make sure you cite the source.
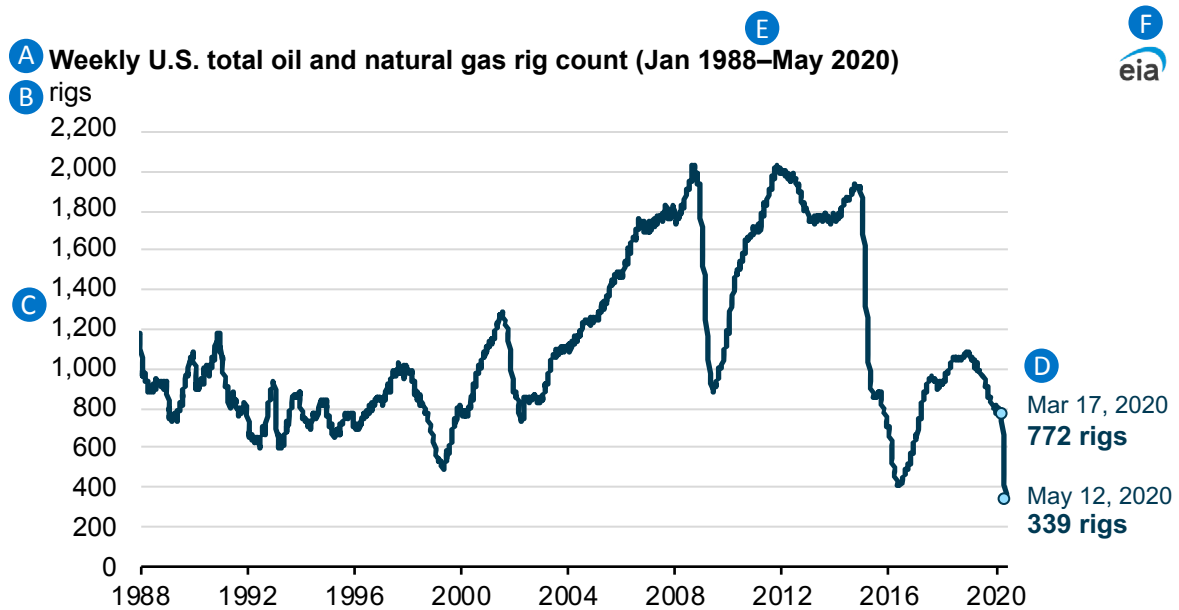
  Example
  Data source: IHS Markit

- Identify EIA when EIA is the source of the data.

  Example
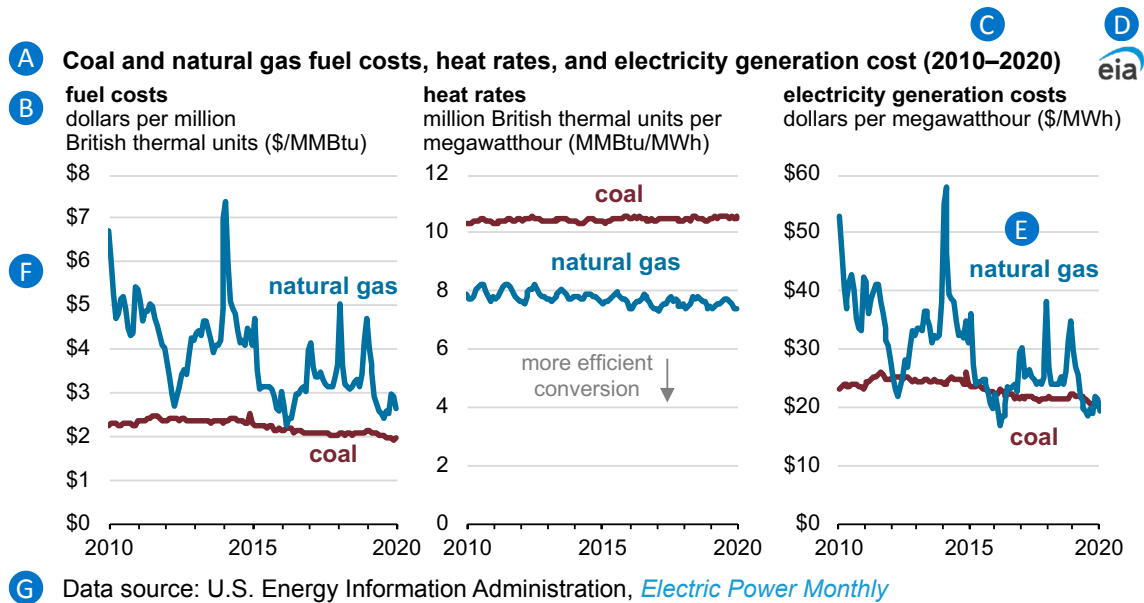 Data source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, Short-Term Energy Outlook, June 2022

- Create a *Table of Figures* to follow the *Table of Contents*.

- Abbreviations are okay in titles and labels as long as they are spelled out in a note at the bottom of the graph.

- Use the following writing standards when creating your graph or chart (see diagrams for detailed examples):

  – Add a period after the figure number.
  – Make the title bold, sentence case (only the first letter of the first word is capitalized), and left justified.
  – Use Arial 8-, 9-, or 10-pt font for notations and labels (legend), and consider matching the color of the labels with the color of the graph lines or bars.
  – Date range for data in titles should include four-digit year, enclosed by parentheses.
  – Use all lowercase letters for the unit of measurement label on the y-axis.
  – Write the units on the X and Y axis in Arial 10-pt font.
  – Use all lowercase letters for the legend and x- and y-axis labels (except for proper nouns).
  – Include the EIA logo.
  – Do not use periods at the end of source notations.
  – Use a period at the end of notes, except when the note is not a complete sentence (for example, spelling out an abbreviation).
  – Write out abbreviations, define them in the graph, or define them in a note.
  – Include the dollar sign and percent sign with the numeral on the y-axis.
  – Use commas in numerals with more than three digits (1,000 not 1000).
  – Spell out *and* instead of using the ampersand (&).
  – Use white lines between pie slices, and consider matching leader line colors to corresponding slices.
  – Italicize publication titles.

– Place source underneath the graph and embed in your image if possible to ensure the source notation follows any visualizations that are reused from our website. Use Arial 9-pt font. Add any notes after the source. Do not use periods after the source. Hyperlink to reports when possible.
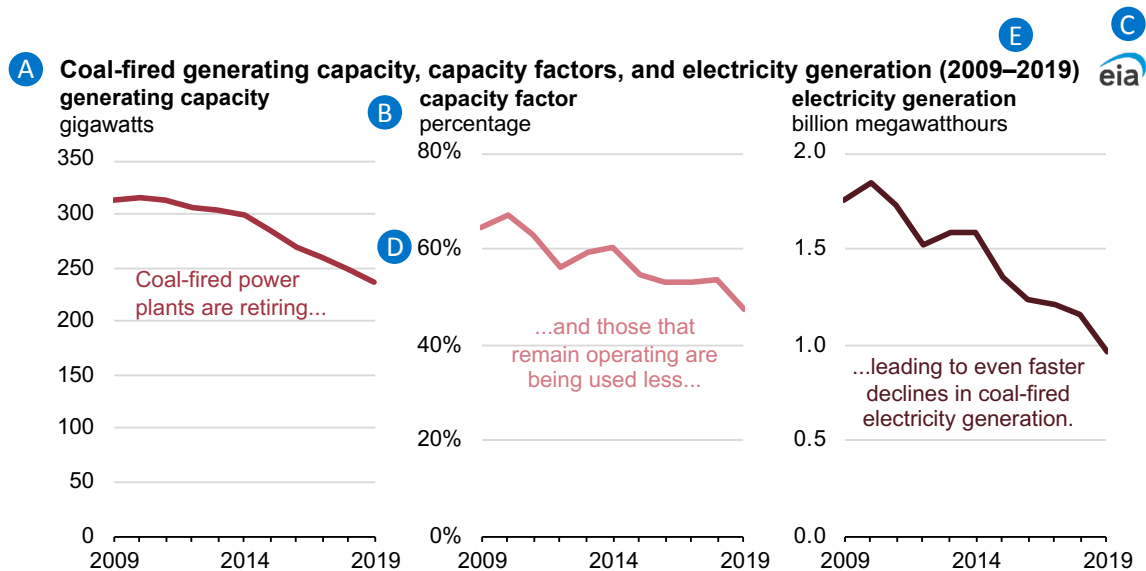
(A) Weekly U.S. total oil and natural gas rig count (Jan 1988–May 2020) (E) (F) eia

(B) rigs

(C)

(D) Mar 17, 2020
772 rigs

May 12, 2020
339 rigs

(G) Data source: Baker Hughes Company

(A) Make the title bold, sentence case (first letter capitalized only), and left justified.

(B) Make unit of measurement label lowercase and left justified in Arial 10-pt font.

(C) Use commas in numerals with more than three digits (1,000 not 1000).

(D) Use Arial 8-, 9-, or 10-pt font for notations and labels (legend). Use all lowercase letters except for proper nouns.

(E) Use three-character abbreviation for months and the four-digit year, enclosed in parentheses and separated by en dash.

(F) Place the EIA logo in the corner (prefer top-right, but bottom-right and bottom-left are acceptable).

(G) Place source underneath the graph and embed in your image if possible to ensure the source notation follows any visualizations that are reused from our website. Add any notes after the source. Do not use periods after the source. Hyperlink to reports when possible.
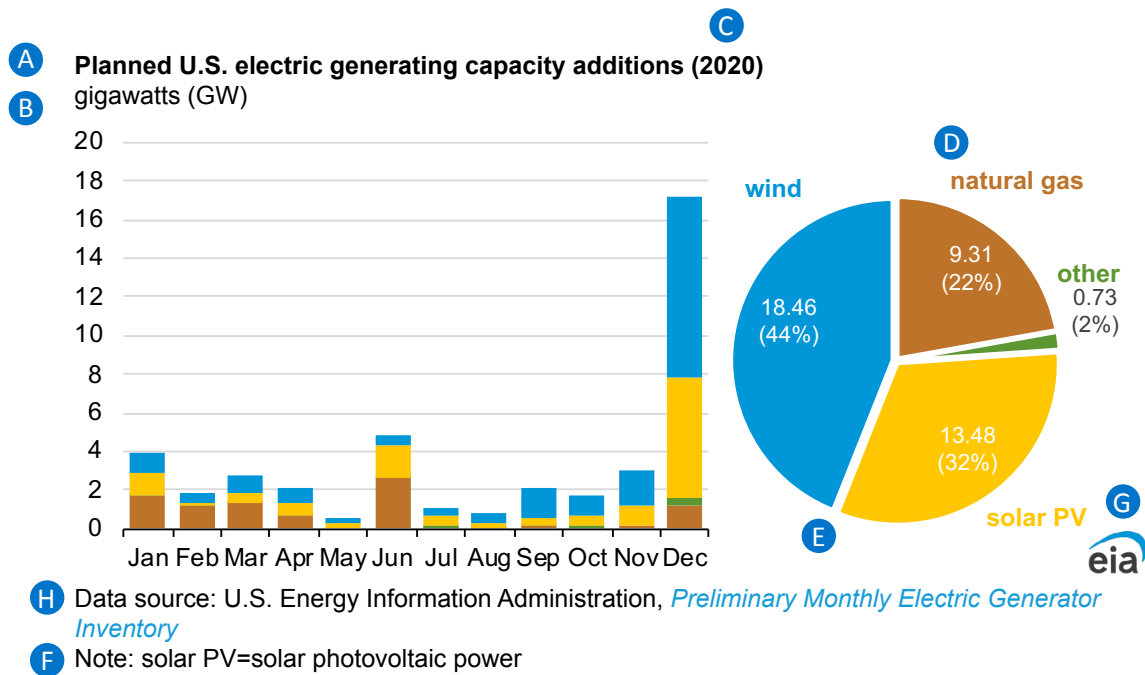
(A) Coal and natural gas fuel costs, heat rates, and electricity generation cost (2010–2020)

(B) fuel costs
dollars per million
British thermal units ($/MMBtu)

heat rates
million British thermal units per
megawatthour (MMBtu/MWh)

electricity generation costs
dollars per megawatthour ($/MWh)

(G) Data source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Electric Power Monthly*

(A) Make the title bold, sentence case (first letter capitalized only), and left justified.

(B) Use all lowercase letters for the unit of measurement label on the y-axis. Panel series name is bold, lowercase, left justified (aligned with vertical axis labels).

(C) Use the four-digit year, enclosed in parentheses and separated by en dash.

(D) Place the EIA logo in the corner (prefer top-right, but bottom-right and bottom-left are acceptable).

(E) Use Arial 8-, 9-, or 10-pt font for notations and labels (legend) and color match to the graph. Include dollar sign or percent sign with the numerals, as appropriate. Use all lowercase letters except for proper nouns.

(F) Include the dollar sign and percent sign with the numeral on the y-axis.

(G) Place source underneath the graph and embed in your image if possible to ensure the source notation follows any visualizations that are reused from our website. Use Arial 9-pt font. Add any notes after the source. Do not use periods after the source. Hyperlink to reports when possible.

(A) **Coal-fired generating capacity, capacity factors, and electricity generation (2009–2019)**

generating capacity
gigawatts

(B) **capacity factor**
percentage

electricity generation
billion megawatthours

Coal-fired power plants are retiring...

(D) ...and those that remain operating are being used less...

...leading to even faster declines in coal-fired electricity generation.

(F) Data source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Electric Power Monthly*

(A) Make the title bold, sentence case (first letter capitalized only), and left justified.

(B) Use all lowercase letters for the unit of measurement label on the y-axis. Panel series name is bold, lowercase, left justified (aligned with vertical axis labels).

(C) Place the EIA logo in the corner (prefer top-right, but bottom-right and bottom-left are acceptable).

(D) Use Arial 8-, 9-, or 10-pt font for notations and labels (legend) and color match to the graph. Include dollar sign or percent sign with numerals, as appropriate. Use all lowercase letters except for proper nouns.

(E) Use the four-digit year, enclosed in parentheses and separated by en dash.

(F) Place source underneath the graph and embed in your image if possible to ensure the source notation follows any visualizations that are reused from our website. Use Arial 9-pt font. Add any notes after the source. Do not use periods after the source. Hyperlink to reports when possible.

(A) **Planned U.S. electric generating capacity additions (2020)**
(B) gigawatts (GW)

(H) Data source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Preliminary Monthly Electric Generator Inventory*

(F) Note: solar PV=solar photovoltaic power

(A) Make series name bold, first letter capitalized, left-aligned with vertical axis labels.

(B) Use all lowercase letters for the unit of measurement label on the y-axis and place directly under series name.

(C) Use the four-digit year in titles, enclosed in parentheses.

(D) Use Arial 8-, 9-, or 10-pt font for notations and labels (legend) and color match to the graph. Include dollar sign or percent sign with the numerals, as appropriate.

(E) Use white lines between pie slices. Use all lowercase letters except for proper nouns.

(F) Write out abbreviations, define them in the graph, or define them in a note.

(G) Place the EIA logo in the corner (prefer top-right, but bottom-right and bottom-left are acceptable).

(H) Place source underneath the graph and embed in your image if possible to ensure the source notation follows any visualizations that are reused from our website. Use Arial 9-pt font. Add any notes after the source. Do not use periods after the source. Hyperlink to reports when possible.

7. Formatting sources for tables and visualizations

Use the following format for source citations for tables, graphs, and other visualizations. If you have more than one item to list for a source, you don't need to list the source twice. *Source*: is always singular, even if you have multiple sources. Use a semicolon to separate three or more sources in the same citation.

Examples

Data source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Petroleum Supply Monthly*, Table 3, December 2016 (one EIA source)

Data source: Bentek data (one external source)

Data source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Manufacturing Energy Consumption Survey 2014*, Tables 1.2 and 2.2, October 2017 and Form EIA-3, *Quarterly Survey of Industrial, Commercial & Institutional Coal Users* (two EIA sources)

Data source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Petroleum Supply Monthly*, and Bloomberg, L.P. (one EIA source and one external source)

Data source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Petroleum Supply Monthly*; Bloomberg, L.P.; and Natural Gas Intelligence (one EIA source and two external sources)

8. Capitalizing report titles and headings

Report titles and first-level headings should be title case. All other headings should be in sentence case. The EIA report template uses this rule for capitalization.

Title case

Capitalize the first letter of each major word in the title and first-level headings. The next section, *Using title case for report titles and first-level headings,* has some additional guidance.

Example

Natural Gas Production Increased in 2015

Sentence case

Only the first word of the title or heading is capitalized (and any names or proper nouns). Use sentence case for second-level headings and below and for titles of graphs and tables.

Example

Natural gas production increased in 2015

9. Using title case for report titles and first-level headings

- Do not capitalize the following unless they begin or end a title or heading:
  - Articles (such as *a*, *an*, and *the*)
  - Conjunctions (such as *and*, *or*, *nor*, and *but*)
  - Prepositions less than four letters (such as *for*, *of*, and *to*)
- Always capitalize verbs, including *is* and *are*.

  Examples

  Projected Summer Gasoline Prices Are Near Last Summer's Level
  Average U.S. Gasoline Price for First Half of 2021 Reaches Record High

- Capitalize all first and last words in title-case titles and headings, even if the last word is a

preposition.

Example
The Signal Scientists Wait For

- Capitalize the second word in hyphenated words.

Examples
Short-Term Energy Outlook
Long-Term Forecast Shows Growth

10. Formatting for bibliography or works cited pages

Follow guidance in the *Chicago Manual of Style* for citation formatting. Make sure you write a full citation because URLs can change.

11. Formatting paragraphs

Use one space after end punctuation. One space is accepted by many style guides and is the default in html.

12. Emphasizing content

EIA prefers italics for emphasis in most cases. The following guidelines explain how to emphasize content with italics and bold fonts.

Italics

- Use italics to emphasize a word or phrase (rather than quotation marks) but rarely a whole sentence or paragraph.

- Use italics for report names, form titles, and surveys.

Examples
Short-Term Energy Outlook
Residential Energy Consumption Survey
Energy Explained

- Don't italicize tools or dashboards.

Examples
International Energy Statistics
U.S. State Energy Portal
Short-Term Energy Outlook Data Browser

- Italicize key terms on their first use. Do not use italics for subsequent uses.

Example
Some cities are participating in the *Clean Cities* program. Other cities may participate in the Clean Cities program in the future.

- Use italics to set off a non-English word or phrase. If the foreign phrase appears frequently in the document, use italics only for the first use. If the phrase appears infrequently in the document, use italics for each use.

Example
Prices rose as a *force majeure* on the El Paso Natural Gas pipeline was lifted near Tucson, Arizona, yesterday.

- Do not use italics for report acronyms.

Example
Annual Energy Outlook 2023 (AEO2023)

Bold

- Use bold sparingly to emphasize subheadings or bullet introductions in text. Do not bold words within a sentence as a substitute for subheadings. The report template is programmed to place the correct emphasis at each heading level.

Example
Spring. Prices increased from winter lows.
Summer. Prices remained constant.
Fall. Prices decreased after summer heat.

Underline and all-caps

- Never underline for emphasis.

- Never underline hyperlinks.

- Never use all capital letters for emphasis.

Appendix

Appendix A

Scientific writing at EIA

Scientific writing serves a purpose, so determining your purpose and your audience is the first step in developing your document. Before you start writing, ask yourself these questions:

- Who is the primary audience for this product?
- What do you want your readers to learn?
- What questions will your readers have?
- What information do your readers need to understand your topic?
- What is the scope of your topic?
- What are the best sources to support your analysis?

Your next step is to consider the format of your document. A short TIE article may require more visualizations, less jargon, and shorter sentences, while a methodology report may require detailed math equations, some jargon, and in-depth explanations.

The five basic principles of scientific writing are accuracy, clarity, conciseness, coherence, and appropriateness; some elements of these principles overlap. As you consider these five factors, your purpose should always be your guiding principle. Does your document align with the needs of your reader and EIA? Although your explicit purpose may be to provide information, you should also keep a few other implicit purposes in mind:

- Establishing trust and credibility
  - You are establishing a relationship with your reader. Your underlying goal is to establish trust between you and your readers, which you achieve through consistency and accuracy in your content, style, and organization. At EIA, we also establish trust and credibility with our readers by maintaining a policy-neutral position.
- Creating a permanent record
  - Published writing is permanent and is a public record of EIA's thoughts and analysis.
- Helping your readers find what they are looking for
  - Your readers are busy people, and stating the objective of your document up front will alert them as to whether or not the content is relevant to their purpose.

The five principles

Accuracy

Writers can think about accuracy (the careful development of facts) in four primary ways:

- Document accuracy
  - Use the appropriate level of detail by establishing a clear problem statement and reader-centric outline (the EIA Document Planner).
- Stylistic accuracy
  - Use accurate, precise words and sentence structure to express your meaning.
- Technical accuracy
  - Analyze and use data to tell your story.
  - Use the correct technical/industry terms when appropriate, and be sure to define or link to definitions if you think your audience may not understand them.

- Data accuracy
  EIA writers should be careful not to mislead readers into thinking that our data or projections are more accurate than they are. Readers need to know the limits of the data accuracy.

  - Are you using the most relevant data?
    Choose the best data set to support your analysis.

  - Are there any caveats to the data or inaccuracies you need to account for?
    Be sure to inform your audience about those issues.

  - Are you providing the proper context to your data?
    Provide enough detail to inform your audience on the significance of the numbers.

  - Are your data the most current and accurate numbers?
    Be sure to submit your document for a Quality Assurance Check.

Clarity

Clarity is how easily your readers will understand your writing.

- Structural clarity

  - Include an introduction with your purpose and scope.
  - Use descriptive titles and headings.
  - Use data visualizations such as graphs and tables.

Conciseness

Discern what your readers need to know from you to achieve the purpose of your document. Don't be tempted to include everything you know about a topic.

- Focus

  - Narrow your scope to a manageable problem and response for the type and size of your document.
  - Identify and eliminate any information that doesn't directly relate to your topic.

- Visualizations

  - Use graphs and tables to demonstrate relationships with fewer words.

- Brevity

  - Cut unnecessary words, sentences, and sections.

Coherence

Coherence is how well your document flows and provides an easy path of progression for your readers.

- Stylistic and logical consistency

  - Use introductions and transition sentences to link the different sections in your document.
  - Organize and express ideas in a logical and consistent way.

- Titles and headings
  - Use clear titles and headings like road signs to direct your reader. Some readers won't want to read your whole document, and clear headings help them find what they are looking for faster.

- Paragraph structure

  - Create strong topic sentences with relevant supporting sentences.
  - Be consistent in the strategies you use to analyze, compare/contrast, define, describe, etc.

Appropriateness

If your document meets your goals for writing and the readers' purpose for reading while meeting EIA's mission, your document is appropriate.

- Appropriate for your audience
  - Your readers' level of technical knowledge drives the choices you make for word choice and level of detail/background.
- Appropriate for EIA
  - Your document should meet the strategic goals that support EIA's mission.

Source: Perelman, Leslie C., Edward Barrett, and James Paradis. *Mayfield Handbook of Technical & Scientific Writing*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997.