

Headquarters Air University

Writing Style Guide



Current as of Feb 2022

The purpose of this guide is to establish uniform guidance in terms of writing style, reduce commonly-made mistakes and foster compliance with established Air Force (AF) guidance. The following AF resources have been used in establishing this guide:

- Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, Jt Pub 1-02
- AF Tongue and Quill
- AFI 36-2406, *Officer and Enlisted Evaluation Systems*
- AFMAN36-2806, *Awards and Memorialization Program*

This guide consists of:

- **Evaluation Rules**
- **Evaluation Style Guidance**
- **Decoration Rules**
- **Decoration Style Guidance**
- **Commonly Used Acronyms**
- **Abbreviations**
- **Hyphenated Words**
- **Commonly Used Words**

The intent of this guide is not to be all-inclusive or exhaustive; rather to serve as a common baseline for accomplishing evaluation reports and decorations. Also, this should not be considered the absolute authority for all military correspondence. It is designed to help standardize abbreviations and minimize returns for corrections on OPRs and EPRs.

Please remember OPRs/EPRs should accurately reflect the performance and accomplishments of an individual. They must paint a picture of an individual's performance that is understandable across AFSCs. The reader should not have to "figure out" what the writer is saying.

OPRs/EPRs/AF Forms 1206 can be difficult to analyze due to the overuse of abbreviations and acronyms. The objective of this guide is to create an abbreviation listing that is common AF-wide (not squadron, wing, NAF, or even MAJCOM specific)

Evaluations Rules

Rules:

1. Use spell-check and/or a dictionary. AF Forms have a spell check function...use it!
2. Ensure applicable sections of the form match the OPR/EPR shell. Correct shell to mirror correct data on OPR/EPR.
3. Ensure bullets align properly on the form.
4. Ensure to check the AU/CC's concur block on back of the evaluation form. If AU/CC non-concurs, Front office will change selection accordingly. Spell out all uncommon acronyms on the back page of an OPR/EPR.
5. Acronyms that are not spelled out should be commonly used AF-wide. Acronyms that are only common within an AFSC must be spelled out.
6. For stratifications, AU/CC will stratify only members that fall under the senior rater ID per the MEL. AU/CCE or AU/A1L can clarify the "out of" number if you want to put a stratification in AU/CC comments.
7. Stratification statements will only be used on EPRs for SNCOs who are time-in-grade eligible for senior rater endorsement. Stratification statements on all other performance reports, to include CMSgt reports, are strictly prohibited.
8. In Section I, Organization, there is no comma between AFB, ARB, and ANG (e.g., MAXWELL AFB AL)
 - i. Do not add component (AD) if member is active duty.
9. Section II (EPRs & OPRs), Duty Title, should be upper/lower case letters as of the close-out date of the OPR.
10. Ensure information in Section I & II match the EPR/OPR shell.
11. Blank rating blocks, refer to AFI 36-2406 for proper annotation.
12. If physically signing an OPR/EPR, date the document with the actual date; use a pen that will not show through the opposite side of the document.

Evaluations Style Guidance

Style:

1. Apply the use of symbols and abbreviations consistently throughout the document.
2. Using a serial comma is optional. Apply this decision consistently throughout the document (e.g., “schools, institutions, and organizations” or “schools, institutions, and organizations”).
3. Any ratings such as “Outstanding” or “Excellent” should be in quotes and the first letter capitalized.
4. Names of official operations should appear in this format: Operation ENDURING FREEDOM; Operation NOBLE EAGLE. Abbreviations (e.g., OEF) are acceptable.
5. Uncommon acronyms must be spelled out in the Remarks section. Creating a continuation sheet solely to record acronyms is not authorized. Spell out Headquarters in all signature blocks, with the exception of the AU/CC’s signature block which does not have Headquarters in his signature block.
6. Numbers
 - a. When a sentence contains numbers in a related series and any numbers in the series are 10 or more, then express all in numbers (9 hamburgers, 12 hot dogs, 6 cookies).
 - b. When using the full organization name, include a “th” or “d” with the number (e.g., 42d Mission Support Group, Ninth Air Force). When using the abbreviated organizational name, do not include the “th” or “d” (42 MSG, 9 AF).
 - c. Always use numerals for:
 - i. Percentages, scores, ratios (10%, not ten % except in decorations which has to be spelled out).
 - ii. Dimension, size, and temperature (size 11 shoe).
 - iii. Numbers referred to as numbers (No 1, #1, number 1).
 - iv. Measurements.
 - v. Age.
 - d. If using dollar amounts or numbers in the thousands or millions, you can also express that number in K or M, such as \$4M or \$4K.
 - e. In OPRs/EPRs, an actual number can be used if requiring space.
7. If spelled out, the terms “professional military education” and “professional continuing education” are not capitalized. Exception: if part of a title (e.g., College of Enlisted Professional Military Education), then it is capitalized.

Decorations Rules

Rules:

1. Spelling errors are unacceptable. Use spell-check and/or a dictionary.
2. Abbreviations and acronyms are not allowed in decorations.
3. Do not separate rank and name between succeeding lines.
4. Meritorious Service Medal and Commendation Medal citations are 14 lines maximum.
5. Achievement Medal citations are 11 or 12 lines maximum.

Decorations Style Guidance

Style:

1. Attempt to alternate between rank/last name and personal pronouns at the beginning of sentences.
2. Names of official operations should appear in this format: Operation ENDURING FREEDOM; Operation NOBLE EAGLE. Abbreviations are not acceptable.
3. Spell out numbers under 10. When a sentence contains numbers in a series and any numbers in the series are 10 or more, express all in numerals (9 hamburgers, 12 hot dogs, 6 cookies).
4. Symbols are not allowed in decorations (spell out “percent” and “dollars”).
5. Spell out all acronyms in decorations.

Commonly Used Acronyms:

AF – Air Force
AFPC – Air Force Personnel Center
CGO – Company Grade Officer
CSAF – Chief of Staff of the Air Force
CMSAF – Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force
DOD or DoD – Department of Defense
FGO – Field Grade Officer
GO – General Officer
HAF – Headquarters Air Force
IDE – Intermediate Developmental Education
IA – Information Assurance
IG – Inspector General
IT – Information Technology
MAJCOM – Major Command
NCO – Non Commission Officer
PME – Professional Military Education
POTUS – President of the United States
SDE – Senior Developmental Education
SecAF, SAF – Secretary of the Air Force
SecDef – Secretary of Defense
SEL – Senior Enlisted Leader
SME – Subject matter expert
SNCO – Senior Non Commissioned Officer
USAF – United States Air Force
USSF – United States Space Force

*MAJCOMs and COCOMs do not need to be spelled out.

**General Correspondence: Spell out acronyms the first time they are used on all general correspondence to include memorandums and letters.

***Performance Reports and AF 1206: Acronyms that are commonly used AF-wide do not need to be spelled out. This list is a guide and is not all inclusive. Acronyms that are not commonly used outside an organization or AFSC should be spelled out.

Abbreviations

Use of abbreviations should be minimized to avoid misinterpretation and ease readability. Just because an abbreviation is on this list does not mean it will automatically make sense in the context of the bullet. Read it as the panel will read it.

A

Abbreviation	abbr
Academic; Academy	acad
Accommodate; Accommodation;	accom
Accompanied; Accompany	“
Accomplish	accomp
Account; Accountant; Accounting	acct
Accreditation	accred
Achieved	achv'd
Active Duty; Administratively Determined	AD
Acquisition/Acquire	acq
Additional	add'l; addn
Administer; Administration;	admin
Administrative; Administrate	“
Advance; Advancement	adv
Air Force	AF
Air Force Specialty Code	AFSC
Agency	agcy
Acknowledge	ack
Air Conditioning	a/c
Aircraft	acft
Air Field	aflld
Air Evacuation	airevac
Airman	Amn
Airman Basic	AB
Airman First Class	A1C
Allocate; Allocation	alloc
Alphabetical	alpha
Alternate	alt
Ammunition	ammo
Amount	amt
Amplified	amp'd
Analysis; analyst	analy
And	&
Air National Guard	ANG
Application	app; applic

Appointment	appt
Approval; Approve	appr
Approximate	approx
Air Guard Program	ARG
Arrival; Arrive	arr
Associate; Association	assoc
Assignment	asgn
Assist; Assistant	asst
Association	assoc
Attach; Attachment	atch
Attention	attn
Attorney	atty
Authority; Authorization; Authorize; Author	auth
Automatic	auto
Auxiliary	aux
Available; Availability	avail
Avenue	ave
Average	avg
Award	awd

B

Balance	bal
Between	btwn
Biological	bio
Board	bd; brd
Boulevard	blvd
Brief	brf
Brigadier General	Brig Gen (USAF)
Budget	bdgt
Building	bldg
Business	bus; biz

C

Calculate	calc
Calendar Year	CY
Calibrate	cal
Cancel	canx
Capabilities	capes
Capital; Capacity	cap
Captain	Capt
Category	cat
Center	ctr; cen
Ceremony	cmny
Certificate; Certification	cert
Certified	cert'd
Chairman	Chmn
Change	chg
Chaplain; Chief	ch; chf
Chapter	chap
Charge	chrg
Check; Checked	ck; chk
Checklist	cklist
Chemical	chem
Chief Master Sergeant	CMSgt
Chronological	chrono
Civil; Civilian	civ
Clear	clr
Colonel	Col
Combat	cmbt
Combination	combo
Command; Commandant	cmd; comdt
Commander	CC; cdr; cmdr; comdr
Committee	cmte
Communication(s)	comm
Company	co
Complete	cmplt
Complex	cmplx
Conference	conf
Configuration	config
Construction ; Construct	const
Continue	cont
Contract ; Contractor	contr
Control	ctl; ctrl
Coordinate ; Coordination	coord

Copy	cy
Corporate	corp
Country	ctry
Course; Courses	crs; crses
Critical	crit
Currency	curr
Customer	cust

D

Damage	dmg
Decontamination	decon
Decoration	dec
Decrease	decrs
Deduct	ded
Defense	def
Degree	deg
Delete	del
Deliver; Delivery	dlvr/dlvry
Demolish/demonstrate	demo
Depart; Departure; Depot; Deputy	dep
Department	dept
Department of Defense	DoD; DOD
Deploy; Deployment	dply; dplymnt
Design	dsgn
Detachment	det
Develop; Development	dev; dvlp; dvlpmnt
Disbursement	disb
Discipline	dspln
Discount; Discontinue	disc
Discrepancy	discrep
Disposition	disp
Distribute; Distribution	dist; distro
Director; Directorate; Direct	dir
Division	div
Document; Documentation	doc
Down	dn
Dozen	doz; dz
Duplicate	dup

E

Each	ea
------	----

Edition; Editor	ed
Education	educ
Effect; Effective	eff
Electronic	elec
Element	elmnt
Eligible	elig
Eliminate	elim
Emergency	emerg
End-of-term	EOT
Endorsement	endr
English	engl
Engineer; Engineering	engn
Enlisted	enl
Entitle; Entitlement	entl
Equal	eq
Equipment	equip
Equivalent	equiv
Establish	estab
Estimate	est
Etcetera	etc
Evacuation	evac
Evaluate; Evaluation	eval
Examination	exam
Exchange	exch; exchg
Executive	exec
Exercise	ex; exer
Expedite	exped
Expense	exp
Experiment; Experimental	exper
Extend; Extension	ext

F

Facility; Faculty	fac
Facsimile	fax
Faculty	fac; facu
Family(ies)	fam; fams
Favorable	fav
February	Feb
Federal	fed
Feet	ft
Field	fld
Figure	fig

Finance; Financial	fin
First Lieutenant	1 st Lt; 1 Lt
First Sergeant	1 st Sgt
Fiscal Year	FY
Fitness	fit
Flight	flt
Flight Plan	flt pln
For	f/
Foreign	fgn
Form	frm; fm
Format	fmt
Forward	fwd
Fraudulent	fraud
Frequency; frequent	freq
Friday	Fri

G

Gallon	gal
General	Gen (USAF)
Generate	gen
Geography; Geographic	geog
Governor	gov
Government	govt
Grade Point Average	GPA
Graduate	grad
Ground	gnd
Group	grp; gp
Guarantee	guar

H

Hazard	haz
Hazardous Material	hazmat
Headquarters	HQ
Health	hlth
Height	ht
Helicopter	helo
High School	HS
High-Visibility	hi-vis
Highway	hwy

History	hist
Honorable	hon
Hospital	hosp
Hours	hrs

I

Identification	ident
Identified; Identify	ID' d/ID
Immediate	immed
Immunization	immun
Implementation	impl
Improve	imprv
Include	incl
Incorporate	inc; incorp
Increase; Increment	incr
Industry; Indorsement	ind
Indefinite	indef
Independent	indep
Individual	indiv
Indoctrinate	indoc
Indorsement; Industry	ind
Information	info
Initial; Initialize; Initiate	init
Injury	inj
Inoperative; Inoperable	inop
Inpatient	inpt
Inquiry	inq
In-residence	in-res
Inspect; Inspector	insp
Institute; Institution	inst
Instructor	instr
Instrument	instrmnt
Insurance	ins
Intelligence	intel
International	intl; int'l
Introduced; Introduction	intro

Inventory	inv
Itinerary	itin

J

Joint	jt; jnt
Journal	jour
July	Jul
June	Jun
Junior	Jr.

K

Knowledge	knwldg
-----------	--------

L

Laboratory	lab
Language	lang
Large; Largest	lrg; lrgst
Latitude	lat
Leader	ldr
Leadership	ldrsp; ldrshp
Leave	lv
Legal	lgl
Lesson(s)	lsn(s)
Letter	ltr
Level	lvl
Library	lib
License	lic
Lieutenant	Lt
Lieutenant General	Lt Gen (USAF)
Limited	ltd
Limited Active Duty Orders	LEAD
Liquid	liq
Locate	loc
Logistic	log
Longitude	long

M

Magazine	mag
Maintenance; Maintain	maint; mx
Major	Maj
Man Hours	man-hrs
Man Power	manpwr
Manufacturing	mfg
Manager	mgr
Manage	manag; mng
Management	mgt; mgmt
March	Mar
Master Sergeant	MSgt
Maximum; Maximize	max
Measure	mea
Medical Evacuation	medevac
Member	mbr
Medical; Medicine, Medium; Median	med
Meeting	mtg
Membership	mbrshp; mbrsp
Memorandum	memo
Message	msg
Method	meth
Mile	mi
Military	mil
Minimum; Minute	min
Miscellaneous	misc
Mission	msn
Mobilization; Mobilize	mob
Modification; Modify	mod
Monday	Mon
Month; Months	mo; mos
Movement	mvmt
Multi-national	multi-nat'l
Multiple	mult
Multi-service	multi-svc

N

National	nat'l; natl
Navigate	nav
Negative	neg
Network	ntwk

Next of Kin	NOK
Nominate; Nominee	nom
Normal	norm
Not Applicable	N/A
November	Nov
Nuclear	nuc
Number; Numerical	num

Q

Object; Objective	obj
Obsolete	obs
Occupation	occup
October	Oct
Office	ofc
Officer(s)	ofcr(s)
Officership	ofcrsp; ofcrshp
On-The-Job Training	OJT
Operations	ops
Opportunity	oppor
Option	opt
Order; Ordnance	ord
Organization	org
Original	orig
Outpatient	outpt
Overtime	OT

P

Package	pkg
Page	pg
Pamphlet	pam
Paragraph	para
Parenthesis; Parentheses	paren
Passenger	pax
Patient; Point	pt
Payment (s)	pmt (s)
People	ppl
Percent	pct
Performance	perf
Perimeter	perim
Period	pd
Permanent	perm

Person	prsn
Personnel	pers; psnl
Physical	phys
Package	pkg
Plan	pln
Planning	plng
Please	pls
Pledge	pldg
Population	pop
Positive	pos
Position	posn
Possession; Possible	poss
Potential	pot
Pound (s)	lb; lbs
Power	pwr
Preference	pref
Preliminary	prelim
Premium	prem
Prepare	prep
President; Presentation	pres
Prescription	Rx
Previous	prev
Priority	pri
Primary	prim
Principal	prin
Private	priv
Problem	prob
Process	proc
Professional; Professor	prof
Program; Programmers	prog; prgm; prgmrs
Project; Projectile	proj
Promotion	promo
Psychology	psych
Publication	pub
Purchase; Purchasing	pur
Purpose	purp

Q

Quality; Qualify	qual
Quantity	qty
Quart	qt
Quarter	qtr
Quarterly	qtrly

R

Range	mng
Rank	rnk
Rate; Rating	rt; rtg
Ready	rdy
Readiness	rdyness
Real-World	rl-wld
Receive	rec; rcv
Recommendation	rec; rcmdt
Reconnaissance	recce; recon
Recognition; Recognize	recog
Record	rcd
Re-enlist	re-enl
Re-examination	re-exam
Refer; Reference	ref
Refurbish	refurb
Regional	rgnl
Registrar	regr
Regular; Regulation	reg
Reject	rej
Religion	relig
Reorganize	reorg
Repair	rpr
Report	rpt
Representative; Represent	rep
Request; Require	req
Research	rsch
Reserve	res; resrv
Reserve Airman Not on Active Duty Orders	Non-EAD
Resignation	resig
Responsible	resp; respon
Result	rslt
Retired	ret
Return	rtn
Review(ed)	rvw('d)
Require	rqr
Requirements	rqmts
Room	rm
Route	rte
Runway	rwy

S

Satisfactory; Satisfaction	sat
Saturday	Sat
Save	sv
Savings	svgs
Schedule; School	sch; sched
Science	sci
Screen	scrn
Search	srch
Second; Section	sec
Secretary	secy
Security	scty
Select; Selection	sel
Semester	sem
Senate	sen
Senior	sr
Senior Airman	StrA
Senior Master Sergeant	SMSgt
Separate	sep
September	Sep
Sequence	seq
Service; Services	svc; svcs
Shipment	shpmt
Signal; Signature	sig
Simulate	sim
Situation	sit
Size	sz
Software	s/w
Society	soc
Specification; Specify; Specialty	spec
Sponsor	spon
Squadron; Square	sq; sqd; sqdn
Staff Sergeant	SSgt
Standard	std
Statistic	stat
Storage	stor
Strategic; Stratification; Strategy	strat
Street	st
Student	stu
Structure	strc
Subject	subj
Subordinate	subor
Subparagraph	subpara
Substitute	sub

Summary	sum
Sunday	Sun
Superintendent	supt
Supervisor	supv
Supplement	supp
Supply; Superior	sup; sply
Support	spt
Surgeon; Surgical	surg
Survey	sur
Survival	surv
Suspense	susp
Synchronized	sync
System	sys

I

Tactical	tac
Target	tgt
Tax	tx
Taxiway	twy
Team	tm
Team Work	tmwk
Technical; Technician	tech
Technical Sergeant	TSgt
Telecommunications	telecom
Telephone	tel; tele
Telephone Conference/Consult	telecon
Temperature; Temporary	temp
Terminate; Termination	term
Territory	terr
Text	txt
Theater	thtr
Thousand	thou
Through	thru
Thursday	Thurs
Total	tot
Tower	twr
Traditional	trad
Training	tng; trng
Transaction; Transport; Transportation	trans
Transfer	xfer
Travel	trl
Transmit; transmittal	xmit

Treatment	trmt; Tx
Tuesday	Tues

U

Unclassified	unclas
Unfavorable	unfav
Universal; University	univ
Unknown	unk
Unsecure	unsec
Urgent	urg
Ultimately	ult

V

Vacant; Vacate	vac
Validate	val
Vax	vaccine
Vehicle	veh
Versus	vs
Vertical	vert
Veteran	vet
Vice President	VP
Visibility; Visual	vis
Vision	vsn
Volume; Volunteer	vol
Volunteered	vol'd
Vulnerability	vuln

W

Weather	wx
Weapon	wpn
Wednesday	Wed
Week	wk
Weight	wt
With	w/
Wing	wg
Withdrawn	wd

Within	w/in
Without	w/o
Workgroup(s)	wkgrp(s)
Workshop	wkshp
World-Wide	wld-wd

Y

Year; Yearly	yr; yrly
Yard	yd
Yield	yld

Hyphenated Words

Air Force-wide	As shown
decision-making (adj)	As shown (decision-making process)
decision making (n)	(process of decision making)
e-mail	As shown
Force-multiplier	As shown
forward-thinking (adj)	As shown
hand selected (v)	As shown
or hand-selected (adj)	
high-tech or hi-tech	As shown
in-residence	use - when referring to school attendance, otherwise can be 2 words
on-line; online	As shown
single-handedly	As shown
2-star or two-star	As shown

Commonly Used Words

Air Force's	As shown
Airman; Airmen	As shown
Counterinsurgency	As shown
follow-up (adj/noun)	Not followup follow up (verb)
general officer	As shown
groundbreaking	As shown
handpicked (verb)	As shown hand-picked (adj/noun)
interservice	As shown – defined as: between or amongst various services
intraservice	As shown – defined as: within the confines of one service
joint	Not capitalized unless part of a title, i.e., Joint Chiefs of Staff. Otherwise written joint air campaign or joint doctrine
linchpin; lynchpin	As shown; either is acceptable
multi	In forming compounds, multi is normally joined to the following word or element without a space or hyphen; multitalented, multimedia, multinational, etc. However, if the second element begins with “I,” it is separated with a hyphen: multi-infection
nationwide	As shown
non	In forming compounds, non is normally joined to the following word or element without a space or hyphen: noncommissioned, noncompliance, nonproliferation, etc. However; if the second element begins with a capital letter, it is separated with a hyphen: non-French
point man	As shown
professional military education (PME)	Do not capitalize when referring to PME in general. Capitalize when part of a title, i.e., College for Enlisted Professional Military Education (CEPME)
re	In forming compounds, “re” is normally joined to the following word or element without a space or hyphen: reopen, rearm, recapture, redress, reissue, etc. However, if the second element begins with “e” it is separated with a hyphen: re-entry

self	When self is joined with a word that can stand alone, it is joined by a hyphen: self-deception, self-confident, self-motivated. In the rare cases when self is joined with a word that cannot stand alone, it is joined without a space or hyphen
topnotch; top-notch;	As shown; all are acceptable top notch
trans	In forming compounds, “trans” is normally joined to the following word or element without a space or hyphen: transcontinental, etc. However, if the second element begins with a capital letter, it is usually separated by a hyphen: trans-Canadian. Note “certain compounds have become one word over a period of time: transatlantic, so check the dictionary if in doubt
Total Force	Capitalize when referring to an inclusive Air Force perspective (active duty, guard, reserves, civilian, etc)
unwavering	As shown
web master	As shown
web page	As shown
website; web site	As shown; either is acceptable
worldwide	As shown
warfighter; warfighting	As shown unless, of course, if the fighting is a verb (she is in the war fighting insurgents)