

FAIR OBSERVER

# AUTHOR GUIDELINES 2026

Join our community of more than **3,000 authors** from over **90 countries** to publish your perspective, share your story and shape the global conversation. Become a Fair Observer and make sense of the world.

We invite you to submit pieces — op-eds, short articles and long reads — on any topic of public interest.

Remember we are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization registered in California engaged in citizen journalism. Our Employer Identification Number (EIN) is 46-4070943. We do not and cannot pay our authors.

Our authors write for us because we give them intellectual freedom to express any point of view as long as it is fact-based and well-reasoned. They share their ideas with our influential global audience spread across over **150 countries**. The authors gain from our editing, which improves their final product by focusing on clarity, logic and accessibility.

Please send your submission as a Microsoft Word or Google Docs document to [submissions@fairobserver.com](mailto:submissions@fairobserver.com).

In your submission, please include:

1. A title, followed by your name.
2. A word count and a three-sentence summary.
3. At least five keywords or key phrases.
4. A bio between 80 and 120 words long, a high-resolution photo and links to your social media and professional websites.
5. Hyperlinks to reliable sources whenever they are needed to substantiate a claim of fact.

Please write in your own voice. Fair Observer is agnostic about perspectives but prizes authenticity among its authors. Fair Observer enjoys publishing courageous and fresh voices with fact-based, well-reasoned insights.

Follow the guidelines below closely. In particular, use the active voice, keep your sentences short and write with clarity.

We cannot reply to all queries because we get a large number of submissions. We endeavor to get back to you in two weeks if your submission meets our editorial guidelines.

If you presume risk to your life, limb, family, property or reputation, you can contact the editorial board to write pseudonymously. The board will guide you through the publishing process that ensures your safety.

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# Intellectual Property Notice

All pieces, including articles, multimedia content and all works of authorship are the author's sole property. Note that the author grants Fair Observer a perpetual, irrevocable, worldwide right and license to use, copy, reproduce, adapt, publish and distribute the author's content in any form.

## How to structure your submission

### Title

Write a catchy headline. Use no more than **ten words** or **70 characters** (including spaces).

The title should give a good idea of what the piece is about; a punchy phrase is not enough. As a rule of thumb, refer to the main topic in the headline. Here are some good examples:

- A New Documentary Highlights China's Expansion Into Ethiopia
- Can Bobby Kennedy Win the Presidency Now? Of Course
- How Do Indians Clean Their Bottoms?
- India's South Has Wealth, but the North Has the Numbers
- Seven Remarkable Things About Khadija, Wife of Prophet Muhammad

### Image

Add a URL link to an appropriate image. You must have the legal right to use the image, so you must either:

- Select an image from Shutterstock. Fair Observer is a paid subscriber of Shutterstock and can access the image you select, except for premium "Offset" images.
- Use an image that is in the public domain or that has a Creative Commons or another free license. Here are some good places to look:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <a href="#">British Library Images Online</a></li><li>○ <a href="#">The British Museum</a></li><li>○ <a href="#">Freepik</a></li><li>○ <a href="#">Gallerie degli Uffizi</a></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <a href="#">The Library of Congress</a></li><li>○ <a href="#">Pexels</a></li><li>○ <a href="#">Unsplash</a></li><li>○ <a href="#">Wikimedia Commons</a></li></ul>
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- Use an image of which you own the copyright.

Write a brief caption describing the image. At the end of the caption, include a **copyright notice**:

- If you are using a **Creative Commons** or other open license, include the required author attribution and a link to the license.
- For images from **British Library** Images Online, use “From the archive of the British Library” and include the shelfmark and folio/page number.
- If you own the copyright, simply add “Author’s image.”

## Author

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Provide your name under the title, after the word “by” (e.g., “By Peter Isackson”). This name will be the same one used for your author bio.

You may use a pseudonym if you have compelling reasons to conceal your identity. Write to [submissions@fairobserver.com](mailto:submissions@fairobserver.com) to make your case.

## Author Bio

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Please provide your author bio. Keep the following in mind:

- Use 80 to 120 words.
- Tell the audience who you are. Include:
  - ✓ Your nationality and city/region of residence.
  - ✓ How you came to be an author.
  - ✓ Your personal interests, hobbies and aspirations.
  - ✓ Your political and ethical causes.
  - ✓ A bit about your family, if you are comfortable.
- Tell the audience why you are qualified to write about the subjects you are writing about. This can include
  - ✓ Your professional history and experiential qualifications.
  - ✓ Your education.
  - ✓ Articles, chapters and books you have authored.
  - ✓ Major media appearances.

Like **Wikipedia**, we prefer to begin biographies with the format: NAME is a NATIONALITY OCCUPATION. For example: John Smith is an English explorer.

In addition to your bio, please include:

- A good-quality headshot. It can be a **photograph or illustration**.
  - ✓ If you are using a **pseudonym**, please use a photograph, work of art or AI-generated image that has symbolic meaning.
  - ✓ You must have the right to use the image you share with us.
- Links that you would like to include in your **profile**, such as:
  - ✓ An academic profile.
  - ✓ A professional website.
  - ✓ LinkedIn.
  - ✓ Facebook and/or X.
  - ✓ Instagram.
  - ✓ YouTube channel.
- Your email address.

See the examples below:

Christopher Roper Schell is an American book editor and policy advisor based in Washington, DC. He is also a contributing editor at Fair Observer. With over a decade of Capitol Hill experience working for three members of Congress, Christopher has handled policy issues varying from the financial crisis to healthcare. After a year spent at the Pentagon as a Congressional liaison, he ran for Congress in a 2020 special election. Christopher studied British literature at Southern Methodist University and law at George Washington University. He enjoys spending his spare time writing, watching movies and entertaining benignly mad eccentrics at his carriage house.

Tara Yarwais is a Kurdish American. Born in Baghdad, she immigrated to the US in 2007. She earned a bachelor's degree in psychology at Belmont University, Nashville, Tennessee, and a master's in terrorism, security and far-right extremism at Richmond University, London, England. It was during her graduate studies that Tara discovered her love of writing. Tara is passionate about understanding radicalization. Studies reveal that radicalization is a process that can turn people to terrorism or manifest in other, less visible forms of radical sentiment. Tara believes that understanding radicalization is the most effective way to counter terrorism.

Raj Shukla is a retired Indian lieutenant general who is a member of India's Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), a constitutional body that selects officers for the Government of India. Before UPSC, Raj commanded the prestigious Army Training Command (ARTAC), headquartered in Shimla. He served the Indian Army with distinction over four decades, holding key positions and winning decorations including India's highest peacetime honor, the Param Vishisht Seva Medal (PVSM). At ARTAC and before, Raj has taken a particular interest in doctrines, military futures and force modernization. He is a soldier-scholar who has authored more than 50 articles and given over 150 talks in India and abroad.

Lee Thompson-Kolar is an American who has spent most of his life in Ann Arbor, Michigan. He is an Associate Editor at Fair Observer. Lee earned his bachelor's degree in communications at Concordia University, Ann Arbor. He discovered his passion for the English language by writing poetry as a child. Lee honed his skills by editing and administering a website as an adolescent and young adult. He follows a conscientious and detail-oriented approach to editing focused on style and accuracy. Lee believes that human expression and art are the greatest joys in life.

Haruko Satoh is a specially appointed professor at the Osaka School of International Public Policy (OSIPP), Osaka University, Japan. She is also the director of international collaboration at the ESG-Integration Research & Education Center at OSIPP and guest lecturer at the Value Research Center, Doshisha University School of Business. Haruko currently runs the "Peace and Human Security in Asia: Toward a Meaningful Japan-Korea Partnership" project, supported by the Korea Foundation. She has worked at the Japan Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House and Gaiko Forum. Haruko studied at Mount Holyoke College, USA, Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies – Bologna Center, Italy, and the University of Cambridge, UK. Her interests lie in state theory, Japanese nationalism and identity politics. Haruko spends her precious spare time reading spy novels, spinning records (i.e., DJ-ing) and enjoying good red wine.

*[Haruko's bio is 138 words long. Note that a particular bio may slightly exceed 120 words if necessary.]*

## Categories

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The piece's Categories section contains **two members**. The **first** is the piece's topic; the **second** is the piece's region. Select the most appropriate category from the following lists:

### Topic

- ✓ Politics
- ✓ Elections
- ✓ Geopolitics

- ✓ History
- ✓ Culture
- ✓ Art
- ✓ Stories
- ✓ Science
- ✓ Environment
- ✓ Medicine
- ✓ Technology
- ✓ Business
- ✓ Economics

## Region

- ✓ Africa
- ✓ Asia-Pacific
- ✓ Europe
- ✓ Latin America
- ✓ Middle East
- ✓ South Asia
- ✓ US & Canada
- ✓ World

## Keywords

Include a list of **four** or **five** key words and phrases to help users find your piece through search engines. Separate them by commas.

For example, the keywords of these guidelines might be:

*how to publish on fair observer, how to write for fair observer, fair observer author guidelines, fair observer editorial guidelines, fair observer submission requirements*

These should include the most important or frequent words in the piece. You can use [this utility](#) to identify them.

## Summary

Include a brief summary of the piece before the full text. The summary must give the gist of the piece in

one to three crisp sentences that total about **50 words**. If the theme is complex, your summary can exceed this limit somewhat. Aim to hit these points:

1. Enough context for an unfamiliar reader to understand what the piece is about.
2. A brief outline of the argument of the piece.
3. The significance or takeaway of the piece.

Most importantly, the summary must tell readers why they should read the piece.

## Text of Piece

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Start with an introduction. Then, break the piece into subsequent sections — there is no section limit, but three to five is ideal.

Begin each section with a **subheading in boldface**. Capitalize only the **first word**. Subheadings retain reader interest and prevent the piece from appearing as a wall of text. They should describe the contents of each section much like the title describes the entire piece.

## Related Reading

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Your editor will select three or four previous pieces from Fair Observer's [website](#) or videos from Fair Observer's [YouTube channel](#) related to your piece. If you see any you know you would like linked, you may include them.

# Writing guidelines

Please note that the following is not intended to be a comprehensive style guide. Rather, it is intended to explain key points of Fair Observer's style that may differ from other common style guides or frequent conventions.

## Overall Structure

- The first paragraph should encapsulate the main point and give the reader a clear sense of what the entire piece contains. Don't bury the lead.
- Use short sentences and short paragraphs. Avoid lengthy parentheticals or dependent clauses. Let your text breathe.
- Focus on transition. Make sure that each sentence and paragraph flows clearly and logically into the next. This helps the reader follow your line of thought.
- If the piece is a narrative, then it should follow chronological order. Making connections between events occurring at different times is fine (and encouraged), but the reader should not lose track of the sequence of events.

## Rhetorical Structure

- Fair Observer is not Wikipedia. You can and should make original conclusions.
- Original conclusions should be supported by facts, and facts should be supported by reliable sources.
- Avoid rhetoric that departs from the facts and makes statements that are not supported by objective data.

Acceptable argument: The British Prime Minister has acquired powers that traditionally belonged to other ministers or to the House of Commons (fact). This is undemocratic, and must be curtailed (opinion).

Unacceptable argument: The British Prime Minister has acquired powers that traditionally belonged to other ministers or to the House of Commons (fact). Britain is an imperialist state and must repent for its crimes against Scotland (unsupported opinion).



- Seek to persuade with arguments, not assertions.
- Avoid endless fact-writing without flow, structure or analysis. Only cite facts to support an argument. A historical overview may be unnecessary if it serves no purpose.
- Cite statistics, quotations and other non-obvious statements of fact by providing a **hyperlink** to a reliable source. This makes your work more credible and strengthens your argument.
  - Common knowledge, like “Ghana is a country in West Africa” or “the Earth revolves around the Sun,” does not need a source.
  - Hyperlink one or two words, not entire sentences. Place them on the most relevant word, often a **verb** or **noun**.
  - Do not use **footnotes** or sources at the end of the piece.
  - When citing a passage from a book, ideally, link a PDF of the text with the proper page number in the URL so that readers can easily find the passage. If a PDF is not available online, link the book’s [WorldCat](#) entry, the publisher’s website or, failing all else, Amazon.
  - Use credible sources such as the **International Monetary Fund**, **World Bank** and the **Bureau of Labor Statistics**.
  - Consider citing information from publications that do not require the reader to subscribe.
    - If you hyperlink content from *Encyclopedia Britannica*, readers who follow the links will not encounter a paywall. Write to us if you would like access.
  - Steer clear of sources known for sensationalism, such as *The Daily Mail*.
  - Be wary of Wikipedia and sources that refer to it.

## Sentence Structure

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- Our mantra is **simplicity**, **clarity** and **consistency**.
- Avoid jargon and slang where possible.
- Use one sentence per idea. Avoid jamming multiple ideas into complex sentences. This confuses readers.
- Use active voice, rather than passive voice, whenever possible.

Wrong: The US is rivaled by China for global supremacy.

Right: China rivals the US for global supremacy.

➤ Use transitive verbs rather than “to be” when possible, as they are more engaging.

Wrong: China is the US’ rival for global supremacy.

Right: China rivals the US for global supremacy.

➤ Use a new verb, rather than a participle, to introduce a new idea.

Wrong: China is the second most powerful nation on Earth, now rivaling the US for global supremacy.

Right: China is the second most powerful nation on Earth. It now rivals the US for global supremacy.

➤ Avoid mixed metaphors.

- “Too many cooks break the camel’s back.”
- “If we can hit that bull’s-eye then the rest of the dominoes will fall like a house of cards... Checkmate.” — Zapp Brannigan, from the TV sitcom *Futurama*.

➤ Avoid libelous claims — claims which may substantially damage a person’s reputation if they cannot be substantiated with evidence or shown to be matters of public concern.

- When mentioning unverified rumors or unclear, ongoing stories that the general public discusses, use the word “allegedly” to avoid libel.

Wrong: Indian Chief Minister Jayaram Jayalalithaa was the mistress of politician Maruthur Gopalan Ramachandran.

Right: Allegedly, Indian Chief Minister Jayaram Jayalalithaa was the mistress of politician Maruthur Gopalan Ramachandran.

## Grammar

➤ Treat group **nouns**, like nations, companies and sports teams, as grammatically singular.

Wrong: Arsenal FC need a striker if they want to win the Premier League.

Right: Arsenal FC needs a striker if it wants to win the Premier League.

Wrong: The United States are an ally of Canada.

Right: The United States is an ally of Canada.

## Spelling

- Use **American English** spelling. When in doubt, refer to [Webster's Dictionary](#).
- Always check the spelling of **proper nouns** (e.g., names of people, places, companies).
  - Use **native spellings** when possible.
    - Always retain special characters from languages that use the Latin alphabet natively, like French and Turkish.

Wrong: Francois Hollande.

Right: François Hollande.

Wrong: Kemal Kilicdaroglu

Right: Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu.

- For the most part, do not use special characters for languages that do not use the Latin alphabet, like Japanese or Armenian. However, some traditional exceptions do exist:

Wrong: Sahan Arzruni.

Right: Şahan Arzruni.

Wrong: Ito Hirobumi.

Right: Itō Hirobumi.

- You can use or drop the Arabic words “al-,” “el-,” “ibn” and “bin”; the German word “von”; the French words “de” and “du”; and similar words from other languages depending on your preference. Do not capitalize these words unless they begin a sentence.
  - Adel al-Jubeir is a Saudi diplomat who is the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs. Al-Jubeir is the second person not belonging to the House of Saud to hold the office.

- For Chinese, follow Pinyin, not Wade-Giles, spelling.

Wrong: Peking.

Right: Beijing.

Wrong: Mao Tse-tung.

Right: Mao Zedong.

- In many cultures, particularly those from the Sinosphere (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese), surnames are written before given names. Write out the full name on first mention and then the surname on subsequent mentions.

Wrong: Deng Xiaoping came to power after Mao Zedong. Xiaoping initiated a series of economic reforms in China.

Right: Deng Xiaoping came to power after Mao Zedong. Deng initiated a series of economic reforms in China

➤ Keep names simple. **Avoid titles and middle initials.**

- Some traditional exceptions, such as John F. Kennedy and George W. Bush.
- Abbreviate initials with a **period (full stop)**. Do not use a **space** between initials in a personal name.

Wrong: MK Stalin.

Right: M.K. Stalin.

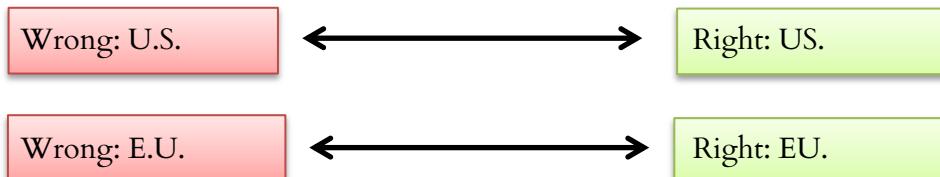
Wrong: H. G. Wells.

Right: H.G. Wells.

➤ Abbreviations.

- Spell out the first instance of **acronyms**.
  - The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).
    - This is not necessary for some universally known acronyms:
      - ✓ AI.
      - ✓ CEO.
      - ✓ EU.

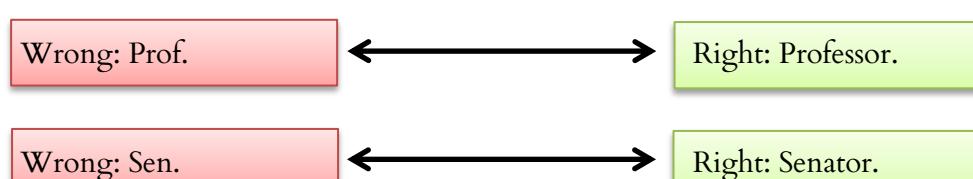
- ✓ GDP.
- ✓ UK.
- ✓ UN.
- ✓ US.
- After spelling out an acronym, use it consistently and do not write the full form again.
  - You may also use common nicknames and abbreviations for publications, political parties, personalities etc. Define these **abbreviations** before using them.
    - First mention: *The New York Times* (*The Times*).
    - Subsequent mention: *The Times*.
    - First mention: The Republican Party, also known as the Grand Old Party (GOP).
    - Subsequent mention: The GOP.
- Generally, an acronym takes an article if it would have an article when spelled out (thus, “the National Basketball Association” becomes “the NBA,” but “Major League Baseball” becomes “MLB”). However, common usage often negates this rule (thus, “the North Atlantic Treaty Organization” becomes “NATO”).
  - Do not use periods (full stops) in acronyms.



- For time of day, use capitalized **AM** and **PM** with a space



- For years, use **AD** and **BC** or **CE** and **BCE** at your discretion.
- Do not abbreviate titles:



- However, some **titles** are traditionally abbreviated.

Wrong: Mister.

Right: Mr.

Wrong: Doctor.

Right: Dr.

- Following a name, “junior” and “senior” should be abbreviated with one period (e.g., Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Francis Kennedy Sr.).

## Formatting and Punctuation

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- Use **Arial font**, size 14 for your title and size 11 for all other text.
- Do not indent the text.
- Left align; do not justify.
- Set line spacing to 1.15 and spacing between paragraphs to 12. Do not create empty line breaks (with the enter key) to separate paragraphs.
- Insert **page numbers** at the bottom right in the **footer**.
- Do not use **double spaces** after a period (full stop). Use just one space.
- Hyperlinks should be **blue** and **underlined**.

Wrong: Link.

Right: Link.

Wrong: [Link](#).

- Make sure that you do not include dangling underlined spaces in your hyperlinks.

Wrong: You can find our webpage at  
<https://www.fairobserver.com/>.

Right: You can find our webpage at  
<https://www.fairobserver.com/>.

➤ Italics.

- Use italics for works that are published independently as complete works or series.
  - Titles of publications and periodicals (e.g., *The Washington Post*, *TIME*).
    - This includes the initial “The,” which is also capitalized if it is part of the official name.
    - Names of books and comics (e.g., *War and Peace*, *The Amazing Spider-Man*).
    - Names of movies, shows and stage plays (e.g., *The Godfather*, *I Love Lucy*, *Hamilton*).
    - Names of board games and video games (e.g., *Monopoly*, *Donkey Kong*).
    - Legal cases (e.g., *Roe v. Wade*, *Brown v. Board of Education*).
- Use **quotation marks**, not italics, for works that are not published independently as complete works.
  - Articles from a periodical (e.g. “The Value of Self-Discipline, as Revealed by Sushi” from *Fair Observer*).
  - Poems from a collection or published in a newspaper (e.g. “Annabel Lee,” published in the *New-York Daily Tribune*).
  - One episode of a television program (e.g. “Threat Level Midnight,” from *The Office*).
- Also use italics for:
  - Names of ships, aircraft and spacecraft (e.g., *Yamato*, *Spirit of St. Louis*, *Challenger*).
  - Scientific names of organisms (e.g., *Passer domesticus*, the house sparrow).
  - Non-English words and phrases spelled in **Latin letters** (e.g., *café au lait*, *Hayat Tahrir al-Sham*).
    - Words in **non-Latin** letters are not italicized (e.g. οἱ πολλοί [*hoi polloi*], הַלְלוּיָה [*hallelujah*]).
    - Do not confuse non-English words with English loanwords derived from other languages (e.g., *panini*, *taco*).

➤ Commas.

- Do not use the serial comma (“Oxford comma”) except when it removes ambiguity:

Wrong: A cat, a mouse, and a rat.

Right: A cat, a mouse and a rat.



Also right: Nutella, peanut butter and jelly, and vegemite sandwiches.

- Use a comma to introduce a direct quotation, unless the quote runs into the sentence.

Wrong: The mayor said “Paterson will spend \$5 million on the new intersection.”

Right: The mayor said, “Paterson will spend \$5 million on the new intersection.”



Also right: The mayor said that Paterson “will spend \$5 million on the new intersection.”

## ➤ Dashes and hyphens.

- Do not confuse em dashes, en dashes and hyphens.
  - Em dashes (—) connote separation.
    - They are set off with spaces.
    - If your keyboard has a number pad, you can type an em dash with the keystroke combination **ALT + 0151**.
    - Em dashes can introduce an explanation, paraphrase, summation or correction of what immediately precedes it. They can also introduce a paradoxical or whimsical ending to a sentence.
      - Things have changed a lot in the last year — mainly for the better.
      - A pair of em dashes can separate an idea from the main sentence.
        - This *magnum opus* is the sum total of the author’s ideas, nurtured — or perhaps provoked — by her environment.
      - You may also set off asides with **commas** or **parentheses**. In general, commas connote a weaker separation from the main sentence than em dashes do, and parentheses connote a stronger separation.

- Do not overuse em dashes. In general, do not use more than one em dash or one pair of em dashes in a paragraph.
  - En dashes (–) connote both separation and relationship.
    - They are not set off with spaces.
    - If your keyboard has a number pad, you can type an em dash with the keystroke combination **ALT + 0150**.
    - En dashes are used for ranges of dates.

Wrong: 1945-1991.



Right: 1945–1991.

- En dashes can also be used to indicate a relationship or event that occurs between two participants.

Wrong: US-Canada relations.



Right: US–Canada relations.

- Hyphens (–) connote combination without separation.
  - They are not set off with spaces.
  - Your keyboard has a dedicated key for typing hyphens. The **minus key** on a number pad also types the same symbol.
  - Do not use a **double hyphen** to substitute for an em dash.

Wrong: Things have changed a lot in the last year -- mainly for the better.



Right: Things have changed a lot in the last year — mainly for the better.

- Hyphenate a multiword phrase that is used as an adjective.

Wrong: A five year old boy.



Right: A five-year-old boy.

- In general, prefixes are **not hyphenated**:

Wrong: Counter-insurgency, anti-corruption, re-election.



Right: Counterinsurgency, anticorruption, reelection.

- Three exceptions apply:

- Use a hyphen if the word that follows is capitalized:

Wrong: TransAtlantic.



Right: Trans-Atlantic.

- Use a hyphen to join doubled prefixes:

Wrong: Subsubcontractors.



Right: Sub-subcontractors.

- Use a hyphen for certain words that are traditionally hyphenated despite not falling under these other exceptions:

Wrong: Noncontender, neopagan.



Right: Non-contender, neo-pagan.

- Do not hyphenate ordinal directions

Wrong: North-west, South-East Asia.



Right: Northwest, Southeast Asia.

- Hyphenate spelled fractions:

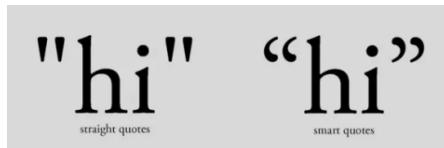
Wrong: Two thirds.



Right: Two-thirds.

## ➤ Quotation marks and apostrophes.

- Use double quotation marks (inverted commas), according to American convention. For example:
  - Biden appeared shocked by what *The Washington Post* described as a “move by OPEC Plus last week to cut its oil output by two million barrels a day,” a decision that would most certainly “boost oil prices in the United States and worldwide.”
- Single quotation marks are only for quotations within quotations, not for paraphrases in the main text. For example:
  - According to *The Wolf Warrior* [a fictional newspaper], “the press secretary repeatedly denied the accusation and told the reporter, ‘We see no need for it, but if required, there will be an investigation.’”
- Use curly quotes, not straight quotes. This eases visual strain by allowing the reader to instantly see where a quote begins and ends:



- Keep commas and periods (full stops) within quotes, even if they are not part of the original sentence, as per American custom.

Wrong: "If life were easy, it wouldn't be difficult", said Kermit.



Right: "If life were easy, it wouldn't be difficult," said Kermit.

- Do not use an **apostrophe** in years.

Wrong: 1990's.



Right: 1990s.

- When forming a possessive from a word or name that ends with the letter *s*, add an apostrophe followed by another *s*. This may appear redundant, but it reduces ambiguity.

Wrong: Hobbes'.



Right: Hobbes's.

- However, do not add a second *s* when the original word is plural either in meaning or in form.

Wrong: George Washington was the United States's first president.



Right: George Washington was the United States' first president.

## ➤ Ellipses.

- An ellipsis can signify that part of a quotation has been omitted. When used in this way, an ellipsis is set off with spaces. It does not require square brackets.
  - "The secretary of state went to the Middle East ... and later traveled to Southeast Asia."
- An ellipsis can also signify that a sentence trails off. When used in this way, an **ellipsis** is not set off with an initial space.
  - There's only one way to find out...

➤ Capitalization.

- Retain stylized capitalizations of brand names.

Wrong: Youtube.

Right: YouTube.

Wrong: Ebay.

Right: eBay.

- For **physical units**, use traditional capitalization. Thus, miles per hour becomes mph, but miles per gallon becomes mpG. Spell units out fully at first mention.
- Capitalize the first word **after a colon** if what follows is a grammatically complete sentence.
  - My mother sent me to the store to buy: milk, eggs, butter and cream.
  - My mother sent me to the store: She wanted me to buy milk, eggs, butter and cream.
- Titles are only capitalized when they immediately precede someone's name:

Wrong: The Prime Minister of the UK.

Right: The prime minister of the UK.

Wrong: Italian prime minister Giorgia Meloni.

Right: Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni.

- Certain traditional expressions are capitalized even when they appear to be mere common nouns (e.g, the CIA becomes “the Agency” and the City of London becomes “the City”).
- When in doubt, refer to [Webster's Dictionary](#).
- In titles, all nouns, verbs and adjectives are **capitalized**, including forms of the verb “to be,” but not including articles.
  - **Prepositions** are **capitalized** if they have four or more letters.
  - **Articles and prepositions** are **capitalized** if they are the first or last word in a title or follow a colon.
- Capitalize your piece's title and other English-language titles in this way. For non-English titles, follow that language's standard.

Wrong: *The Catcher in the rye.*

Right: *The Catcher in the Rye.*

Wrong: *Como Agua Para Chocolate.*



Right: *Como agua para chocolate.*

- Do not capitalize section headings as titles.

➤ Numbers.

- Spell numbers from one to ten, then use numerals for 11 and higher.
- Decimals are an exception.
- Apply the same rule to numbers followed by “thousand,” “million,” “billion,” etc.

Wrong: 2 million.



Right: Two million.

Wrong: Eleven million.



Right: 11 million.

Wrong: Three-point-one-four.



Right: 3.14.

- Always use numerals before **symbols**: e.g., 5% and 10° C.
- Always use the % symbol for percentages and the ° symbol for temperatures.
- Never start a sentence with a numeral. If possible, rewrite sentences to avoid beginning with a number. If this is not possible, write the number (and any associated symbols) in words.

Wrong: 80% of the citizens voted in the election.



Right: Eighty percent of the citizens voted in the election.

Even better: Voter turnout in the election was 80%.

- Do not write years out in words.

Wrong: 2020 was a difficult year.



Right: The year 2020 was difficult.

Wrong: Two thousand and twenty  
was a difficult year

- o Do not abbreviate numbers.

Wrong: The US population is about 335 M.



Right: The US population is about 335 million.

Wrong: The world population is about 8 bn.



Right: The world population is about eight billion.

- o Always use **commas** to mark thousands.

Wrong: 5200.



Right: 5,200.

- o Do not use **superscripts** for **ordinal numbers**.

Wrong: The 19<sup>th</sup> century



Right: The 19th century.

- o Dates

- Use **American dates**. Separate the day from the year with a comma; do not abbreviate the month. Do not use ordinal numbers.

Wrong: 6 June 1944.

Wrong: June 6 1944.



Right: June 6, 1944.

Wrong: Jun. 6, 1944.

Wrong: June 6th, 1944.

## ➤ Currency.

- o State money figures in **local currency**. Include the equivalent figure in **US dollars** in parentheses. Do not use the current exchange rate. Use the exchange rate from the time of the figure mentioned.

Wrong: The project was completed in 1973 and cost £10,000 (\$12,200).

Right: The project was completed in 1973 and cost £10,000 (\$24,500).

At the time of writing these guidelines, the pound-to-dollar ratio is 1:1.22.

In 1973, the pound-to-dollar ratio was 1:2.45

- Use **symbols** for the following major currencies: American dollars (\$), European euros (€), British pounds (£), Chinese renminbi (¥), Russian rubles (₽), Indian rupees (₹) and Japanese yen (¥). For all other currencies, spell out the names after the figures. Do not use three-letter abbreviations.

Wrong: The project cost CAD\$10,000 (6,940 USD).

Right: The project cost 10,000 Canadian dollars (\$6,940).

- When you need to distinguish two currencies that share the same name, use the **adjectival form** of each country (e.g., Australian dollars, Canadian dollars).

## ➤ Temperature

- Always use numerals, not words, for temperature. Use the **degree sign** (°). If your keyboard has a number pad, you can type the degree sign with the keystroke combination **ALT + 0176**. Use the degree symbol, followed by a space, for Celsius.

Wrong: Nine degrees Celsius.

Right: 9° C.

Wrong: 9 C.

- You may use either **Celsius** or **Fahrenheit** at your discretion. However, if you use Fahrenheit, please include the Celsius equivalent in parentheses.
  - -32° F (0° C)

## ➤ Lists.

- Lists may be run into a sentence or set vertically.
  - If you use letters or numerals to distinguish members of a run-in list, enclose them in parentheses.
    - My mother sent me to the store to buy (a) milk, (b) eggs, (c) butter and (d) cream.

- Use an em dash, followed by a space, to introduce each member of a vertical list. **Capitalize each member** and end with a period (full stop), even if it is not a complete sentence. Use a hanging indent.
  - The president asked his generals to achieve the following:
    - Secure the Panama Canal.
    - Conquer Greenland from the Kingdom of Denmark.
    - Launch an invasion of Canada.
    - Protect Taiwan from China.
    - Maintain US global dominance.

# Example Piece

Carefully study the piece below to see the application of the above instructions in practice.

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## Great Compassion Shines in Brazil Following Its Horrific Floods

By Luiz Cesar Pimentel

### Author Bio

Luiz Cesar Pimentel is the Brazilian editor of the weekly magazine *ISTOÉ*, the second largest in Brazil. He has worked in communications for 25 years, focusing on digital, strategy and transmedia storytelling. Luiz led the Brazilian operations of MySpace, Jovem Pan and *R7*. His career has seen him work as a reporter for *Folha de S. Paulo*, *Carta Capital* and *TRIP* magazine, as well as the manager of UOL and an international correspondent in Asia. Luiz has also written seven books in the area of communication. He holds postgraduate degrees in international journalism from the Poynter Institute in Florida and artificial intelligence for communication from the University of California, Berkeley.

### Author Image



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### Categories

World News, Central & South America

### Keywords

Brazil, Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, Rio de Janeiro, flood, flood aid, Brazilian government aid, Azenha Solidarity Kitchen, Popular Youth Uprising, Central Única das Favelas, Edu Leporo, Caramelo, Lucas Silveira

## Summary

Faced with its largest catastrophe, Brazil is uniting thousands of volunteers to help the devastated southern state of Rio Grande do Sul. Solidarity between the victims, volunteers, NGOs and government is essential to aid over two million people suffering in the aftermath of severe flooding.

## Image

<https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/flood-southern-brazil-leaves-city-igrejinha-2459444033>

## Text of Piece (2335 words)

Terrible floods have engulfed the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul. Record rainfall started in late April and concluded in early May 2024. The data are superlative; flood water has killed over 100 people and affected 90% of the state's municipalities. Of the over two million inhabitants impacted, one in every 20 has had to move. Experts estimate that Brazil's recovery bill will cost tens of billions of dollars and last for years. Additionally, the water has not yet fully receded. This is the country's largest territorial disaster.

But a huge positive development has occurred: A network of spontaneous solidarity has arisen in Brazil's other 25 states and the Federal District. They have formed the largest mobilization of donations and volunteerism in the country's history. In the month since the floods began, the Civil Defense has collected 2,000 tons of donations. The Services for the Underserved (S:US) volunteer bank has registered 70,000 records. These numbers showcase the virtuous circle of aid that has united the country.

Brazilians have proven to be generous in serious situations before. In the world solidarity ranking, the World Giving Index (2022), the country ranked 18th out of 119 nations for their contributions to helping strangers, donating money and volunteering. The figure reflected a time when the world was emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic, a calamity that severely impacted Brazil. In the next year, 2023, political uncertainty and the population's impoverishment majorly reduced the country's giving; it fell to 89th place in the index.

"This contributed to a decrease in the population's participation in donations," said Paula Iabiani, CEO of Integrated Disbursement and Information System (IDIS). Her company represents the ranking. At the current rate of collaboration in recent days, it is likely that the country will return to the top positions in 2024.

"We are being profoundly impacted by the experiences of other human beings. Cognitive and also emotional impact, linked to our ability to let ourselves be sensitized by what others experience. It touches on our affections and unconscious identifications. This is the primordial impulse for solidarity action," psychoanalyst Maria Homem said.

As Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva celebrated on X, this is the "largest movement of donations recorded in the history" of Brazil. Further, the chain that formed is multidisciplinary and goes beyond the expected crisis professionals: doctors, firefighters, social workers and health professionals.

## NGOs and volunteers show solidarity

One unexpected resource is SOS Rio Grande do Sul. This [platform](#) connects and updates the needs and availability of over 400 shelters across the state. A total of 1,300 volunteers work to meet the flood victims' demands. They update the day-to-day life of the shelters, provide care for the children and collect and distribute supplies.

"The first few days were focused on rescues. But everything changes very quickly," said Pedro Schanzer, a founder of the Porto Alegre-based operation. "I was putting donations in trucks, rescuing people in the floods, until I noticed that at each point I arrived, the desperation was so great that there was no single coordination. We set up a team that has adapted our actions according to the needs of each day."

For the roughly 100,000 children displaced by the floods, the treatment must be different. Many have not only lost their homes, but cherished belongings as well, like toys and pets. World Vision Brazil, a child care non-governmental [organization](#) (NGO) based in São Paulo, has helped by putting together 15,000 "tenderness kits." These kits aim to restore children's emotional well-being by stimulating them with activities. They include a toy, coloring books, colored pencils and crayons, educational games, modeling clay, and snacks. The organization has also assembled food baskets, hygiene kits and basic necessities.

"Children are one of the most vulnerable groups in the midst of crises, and often have no idea of the magnitude of the events they are experiencing. They find themselves away from home, family and friends, and are likely to be psychologically impacted by this crisis," [said](#) Thiago Crucciti, director of World Vision Brazil. "Without an appropriate intervention, these events could leave lasting scars. We must respond now to ensure that they get the support they desperately need."

Brazilians created another group to provide care for a specific minority. In the Cristo Redentor neighborhood of Rio Grande do Sul, the Solidarity Kitchen prepares meals in a shelter for pregnant and postpartum women. The volunteers receive donations, buy supplies, assemble menus and organize the space. "We work with donations of food or by Pix [[payment system](#)]," said founder and publicist Kaká Cerutti.

In the city of Porto Alegre, the Homeless Workers Movement ([MTST](#)), the Movement of People Affected by Dams ([MAB](#)) and Popular Youth [Uprising](#) collaboratively run the Azenha Solidarity Kitchen. Every day, 60 volunteers use 22 stoves to prepare and distribute around 3,000 meals.

Solidarity transcends geographical boundaries and socioeconomic conditions. The Rio-founded Central Única das Favelas ([CUFA](#)) organization proves it; it promotes integration and social inclusion in Brazilian communities, as well as 15 other countries. It mobilized a humanitarian operation that in two weeks [collected](#) 20,000 cleaning kits; 25,000 personal hygiene kits; 20,000 liters of water; five carts of food; 30,000 bath kits and 30,000 mattresses.

Individuals can make a difference, too. Firefighter Robinson Luiz Jobim Rosa did an extraordinary service; while his own house was flooded in São Leopoldo, he evacuated 200 people stranded at the Canoas Emergency Hospital. "Saving people in their time of need and distress is part of our routine. I keep working because that's our mission," he said.

Jobim Rosa still doesn't know how he'll recover from the floods. Fortunately, his three children and their mother were elsewhere when the water reached their home. "The only one at home at the time was my dog, who was rescued by a neighbor," he mentioned.

A similar story involved police officer Roberto Kaminski in Lajeado. When he saw the water rushing into his apartment on the second floor, he went to rescue an elderly couple on the third floor. With the help of a neighbor, he took what he could carry to two empty apartments on the fourth floor. “I must have climbed about 150 times. By the end, I was exhausted. I didn’t manage to rescue everything I wanted in time,” he explained.

In Santa Cruz do Sul, police officer Everton Toillier prioritized saving items belonging to his one-year-old daughter. When he heard a neighbor’s call for help, he immediately swam out and rescued a lady who was clinging to a tree, and saved her dog as well. “I managed to get them both to a boat and went back home to try and rescue my daughter’s belongings,” he stated.

Many helpful volunteers started out with one mission and ended up on another, like Edu Leporo, founder of the NGO Moradores de Rua e Seus Cães ([MRSC](#)). Based in São Paulo, the photographer and activist traveled to the South to assist animals in the floods. “You see whole families on the streets, not knowing where to go. The problem will get worse when the water recedes and people want to go back to their homes and start again,” he stated. “We went ahead: We bought a trailer, a truck, squeegees, brooms, shovels, detergent, disinfectant and floor cloths to help.”

In Porto Alegre, Leporo relies on the NGO’s volunteer veterinarian Audrei de Oliveira Souza. The assistance forces rescued 11,500 animals by midweek, including the symbol of the resistance: a horse named [Caramelo](#). “The rescue team is exhausted, tired and cold. Some are getting sick. But they remain tireless in their search for human and animal survivors,” Leporo described.

Christian Kristensen, the coordinator of the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (PUC-RS) Center for Studies and Research into Trauma and Stress, helped the rescuers. He identified several cases of burnout — the physical and emotional exhaustion caused by work — among them. “Some because they’ve been overworked, even physically, others because of the emotional overload in the face of so much suffering. Even compassion fatigue, a term we use for this moment,” he explained.

### **Artists unite to help**

Technological resources have helped mitigate the catastrophe. “How can the hyperconnection of mobility and communication be used favorably? How can we solve global problems with specific regional effects?” Homem asked. “The awareness that we are one people and one species mobilizes us in an unprecedented way.”

Artists and public figures are some of the most adept at navigating networks and platforms. In the disaster’s first days, Lucas Silveira, lead singer of the Brazilian band Fresno, led his colleagues in a solidarity concert. He was born in Ceará but raised in Porto Alegre, so this tragedy is personal to him. He raised 2.5 million reais (\$460,000) in just a few hours.

“What’s happening is something of unprecedented proportions. I saw my neighborhood on TV and a guy passing in front of my house in a boat. It’s mind-boggling,” Silveira stated, considering the next steps. “There’s a task force that’s going to get thousands of volunteers to clean the houses. We’ve bought more than a hundred pressure washers at cost, which will be very useful for cleaning up when the water recedes.”

Other big names in music have announced plans to help. On July 7 and 9, Chitãozinho & Xororó, Zezé Di Camargo & Luciano and Leonardo & Luísa Sonza will host their classes at Allianz Parque in São Paulo. The

proceeds will be put toward flood damage repair. “Helping is urgent and meeting basic needs is the least we need right now. Today, regardless of where we are, we want to save the South,” Sonza said.

Another benefit [concert](#) was held on May 22 at the Vivo Rio venue in the city of Rio de Janeiro. It brought together singers Paula Toller, Ney Matogrosso, Rogério Flausino, Milton Guedes, Fernanda Abreu, Léo Jaime and Kleiton & Kledir, as well as the rock band Barão Vermelho.

During the first week of rain, comedian and presenter Fábio Porchat started a collection campaign. He gathered tons of drinking water, bed and bath linen and warm clothes to distribute in the South. “Donating should be the norm, not the exception,” he told [ISTOÉ](#). “It’s worth donating time, money, image, whatever. If we want a functioning community, we need to do our bit to help others.”

The mobilization to help the Brazilian South has crossed borders and reached some of the world’s lead artists. Beyoncé’s foundation BeyGOOD, which [supports](#) some Brazilian initiatives, has stepped up its work to encourage collaboration. The band Metallica [donated](#) \$100,000 (about 514,000 reais) to the victims. The band Guns N’ Roses has been [promoting](#) Brazil Found’s Light Alliance Emergency Fund for donations.

### **The Brazilian government plans a solution**

During the floods’ second week, the people of Rio Grande do Sul received good news from the Brazilian capital of Brasília. On his third visit to Porto Alegre, Lula announced the [creation](#) of the Ministry to Support the Reconstruction of Rio Grande do Sul. It will be headed by Paulo Pimenta, who was the Minister of the Social Communication Secretariat. The ministry’s mission will be to define the state’s reconstruction plan, distribute tasks to other ministries and demand results.

The minister of the Civil House, Rui Costa, explained that the Brazilian government will expand the Minha Casa, Minha Vida (“My Home, My Life”) [program](#) — which provides a swath of affordable housing units to Brazilians — in the affected cities with the purchase of properties. The government will also direct properties that were set to be auctioned by the Caixa and Banco do Brasil banks to replace those that the floods destroy.

The National Confederation of Municipalities ([CNM](#)) estimates that 102,000 homes were affected by the floods: 93,000 damaged and 9,000 destroyed. Many families will need help to buy basic goods, such as a stove, fridge and bed. To this end, the government proposes financial aid of 5,000 reais (\$920) for 100,000 families. The homeless who lost their income in the floods are to be included in the [Bolsa Família](#) income transfer program, with average monthly aid of 672 reais (\$123).

The state’s debt to the federal government has been suspended for three years, which will generate savings of 23 billion reais (\$4.2 billion), including monthly payments and interest for the period. The Porto Alegre city government plans to build a temporary city for homeless families close to the city center. Located in the Porto Seco neighborhood, it will have capacity for 10,000 people. It will include accommodations, a communal kitchen, toilets, garbage collection and a leisure area to receive people assisted in the current shelters. Canoas, Guaíba and São Leopoldo will receive similar facilities.

The initiative draws inspiration from a recovery [project](#) that helped the US state of Louisiana recover from Hurricane Katrina in 2005. After the hurricane, the project managers hired consulting [firm](#) Alvarez & Marsal, which specializes in the reconstruction of damage caused by extreme events, to draw up an assistance plan. Former president Dilma Rousseff, who is from Minas Gerais but built her political career in

Rio Grande do Sul, is currently in charge of the New Development Bank, known as the [BRICS Bank](#). She opened a 5.75-billion-real (over \$1.1 billion) funding line for the state's reconstruction work.

Throughout the week, the plenary of the Federal Senate fast-tracked the approval of a bill that creates guidelines for forming climate change adaptation plans. The goal is to adopt measures to reduce environmental, social and economic vulnerability in episodes of climate upheaval. "In addition to actions and public policies that affect real life, we need to improve the mental health support network, because we are discovering that psychic life is just as important and can have just as many effects on reality as concrete life," Homem recalled. "Solidarity is the most important good at this time and should be deepened if we want a fairer, more developed and interesting country."

*[Lee Thompson-Kolar edited this piece.]*

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