

WRITING TIPS FOR RESEARCHERS

SPELLCHECK YOUR MANUSCRIPTS. Use editing programs to proof your manuscript before uploading it. WORD has a decent editing function, and for something a little more robust, Grammarly and ProWriting Aid are free.

NUMBERS and ABBREVIATIONS – use numerals for physical measurements, for numbers greater than ten, or with an abbreviated unit of measure, e.g. *12 ft*

PUNCTUATION

Series comma: American style uses a comma after the next to last element in a series:

- The performance-based earthquake engineering methodology developed is broadly applicable for predicting the seismic performance of *bridges, buildings, and lifeline systems*.

Quotation marks and comma: American style uses double quotes, with commas or periods placed inside the quotes. Single quotes are used for a quote within a quote.

- The simulation results in the figures are truly “*blind*,” meaning they were established before the strong motion data were released.
- He said, “The simulation results in the figures are truly ‘*blind*,’ meaning they were established before the strong motion data were released.”

Commas precede and follow *i.e.* and *e.g.* in sentences like the following:

- The initial strain of a simple truss model showed a secondary geometric *effect, i.e.*, the P- Δ effect.
- The larger target frequency is generally taken as an odd-integer multiplier of the fundamental frequency, *e.g.*, 3, 5, 7.

Parentheses with numbering or labeling: always include both parentheses: (1), (i), (a).

An “-ly” adverb used with an adjective as a unit modifier of a noun should not be hyphenated:

- *relatively complex* site effects
- *seismically induced slope displacement*

The three types of dashes in order of length are

- **hyphen** To join compound words: *performance-based* earthquake engineering
- **en dash** To represent *to* between figures or words. But use *to* if the figures are preceded by *from*.
This response can be seen in *Figures 2.3–2.4*. [But] From *Figures 2.3 to 2.4* we can see the response.
- **em dash** To indicate an abrupt change of thought. Because the four stages of the PBEE assessment methodology are treated as conditionally independent, each stage can be conducted separately—provided that the exchange of information is carefully organized.

MISCELLANEOUS

Definite article: unless the reference is indefinite, use the definite article:

- *The results* obtained from the shaking table tests of the specimen are presented in this section.
- *Shaking table tests* are often necessary to verify results of numerical analyses.

Comprise/Constitute: *Comprise* means to contain, embrace. Don’t use “comprised of”—it’s wrong. *Constitute* means to make up part of a whole.

- This report *comprises* eight chapters.
- Eight chapters *constitute* the book.

Data is plural, so use a plural verb:

- The data are presented below.

Due to the fact; the fact that: Avoid using these wordy phrases. In many instances *because* is better.

- *Because* crossties were used, no out-of-plane failure occurred.