



STYLE GUIDE

A NOTE ON STYLE GUIDES

Style guides are handy tools to help writers and editors shape the experience of the reader and/or create a particular aesthetic for a publication. Style guides are influenced and shaped by literary trends; linguistic “norms”; and social, cultural, and political perspectives.

All that to say: style guides can be helpful, but they can also **create and/or perpetuate standards that are colonial, pretentious, and problematic in countless ways.**

Many of our particular stylistic choices are based on making the magazine more accessible by creating a consistent experience. However, we often deviate from these “rules” when writers play with style creatively and impactfully to **disturb or disrupt the status quo.**

And so, while we have a style guide, it is a living document that will change and grow and shrink over time. We invite you to send us feedback on the style guide—of any kind—and we will do our best to reflect the diversity of styles and approaches our contributors have to writing.

There is no expectation for a piece to conform to every one of these, this document serves mostly as a heads up that **we copy edit submissions**, but also as a request to let us know if you’re doing something intentionally so we can take that into consideration.

Feedback on this style guide can be sent to openminds@nisa.on.ca

IN-HOUSE PREFERENCES

- We follow the CP/Canadian Press Style Guide unless otherwise specified.
- We use the Oxford/serial comma (the comma before the last item in a list).
- We use em dashes (—) not en (-) dashes, without spaces on either side.
- We *italicize* internal dialogue and titles of publications/films/songs.
- We do not italicize non-English words.
- We use “quotation marks” for direct speech, direct quotes, voices heard by a character.
- We do not capitalize psychiatric diagnoses or medical diseases unless they include a proper noun—likewise for medications.
- We keep regional spellings to reflect the diversity of contributors.
- We use the singular they instead of “he/she” and “he or she,” and in general references.
- We capitalize Black and Indigenous.
- It is not acceptable to make discriminatory or judgmental statements about groups of people, including but not limited to: racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ageism, classism, and discrimination based on religious beliefs or practices.
- Material we deem triggering will be weighed against the need for readers to read it.
- Avoid writing about other people’s experiences as though you are an authority on them. (ie. Someone who has bipolar is better equipped to write about it than someone who does not.)
- If foul language is called for: Use it!