

# How to Use This Book

## Introduction

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*This excerpt from the Lotus Documentation Style Guide shows the scope, structure, and level of detail for the text. As leader for this update project, I learned much about negotiating. For this task to succeed, I had to move strongly opinionated editors in fourteen different product groups from mere participation to cooperation. These pages show the areas of consensus and compromise very well. Lotus was a computer software developer best known for its spreadsheet product, 1-2-3.*

This is the second edition of the *Lotus Documentation Style Guide*, printed June 1990. It is the primary reference for all Lotus® technical end-user documentation. The rules in this guide apply to documentation only; they do not apply to training materials, marketing pieces, product demos, presentations, and brochures.

In general, all Lotus documentation is expected to follow the rules in this guide. Some rules have exceptions that appear in an attached note. Other rules may be inappropriate for certain products, platforms, and users. A rule can be modified if

- The documentation for a product is subject to terms specified in a contract with another company.

For example, the terminology and presentation of material for 1-2-3/M is subject to a contractual agreement with IBM®.

- The marketing team positions a product to match non-Lotus standards.

For example, the presentation of commands, keys, and terminology used with Lotus Macintosh® products is influenced by standards in the Macintosh world.

Concomitantly, documentation for workstation products is influenced by the operating system. Because UNIX commands are case-sensitive, it is incorrect to present certain commands with the initial cap that is Lotus style.

If no product-specific, platform-specific, or user-specific issue makes a rule inappropriate and no exception is given in the guide, then follow the rule as presented.

## How to Find Information

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Chapter 1, “Style,” presents all rules governing style and usage.

Chapter 2, “Book Components,” discusses the generic components of a book and a documentation set and standard titles to be used with different books.

Chapter 3, “Internationalization,” offers writing, terminological, and example guidelines to make English-language documentation easier to translate.

Chapter 4, “Terms,” lists and defines all terms used in Lotus documentation.

Chapter 5, “Indexing,” present the rules and methodology for creating an index.

## Secondary Reference Books

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### Usage and Style Books

This guide deals almost exclusively with documentation-specific issues. For general writing and usage information, consult the following books.

For usage information not found in this guide, consult *A Manual of Style, Thirteenth Edition* (informally called the *Chicago Manual*).

For topics not covered in either this guide or *A Manual of Style*, see *Words Into Type, Third Edition*. Conventions in *Words Into Type* are superceded by those in this guide or *A Manual of Style*.

### Dictionaries

#### Traditional

For spelling and hyphenation, see the *American Heritage Dictionary, Second College Edition*. In any case where multiple spellings are offered in the main entry, *always* use the spelling listed first.

#### Electronic

Most electronic spelling checkers use a Merriam-Webster® lexicon. Since hyphenation conventions differ among dictionaries, a spelling checker may produce a work break that is different from that in the *American Heritage Dictionary*. For example, *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* says “at-mosphere” and the *American Heritage Dictionary* says “at-mos-phere.” Both are correct. Do not spend time correcting spelling-checker work breaks that do not match those in the AHD.

#### Technical

No dictionary of computer-specific terminology has emerged as an industry standard. Few offer pronunciations or discriminate among forms. The most ubiquitous are a pair of companion books: *Computer Dictionary* by Charles J. Sippl and Roger J. Sippl and *Microcomputer Dictionary* by Charles J. Sippl.

## Supplemental References

The following list contains a variety of books that many Lotus writers and editors have found useful because of their clear explanations, helpful formats, or effective indexes. Continue to use any of these books, but always verify that the conventions presented in them do not conflict with those in this guide or in the official reference books.

*The Careful Writer: A Guide to English Usage*, by Theodore M. Bernstein.

*Clear Technical Writing*, by John A. Brogan.

*A Concise Grammar of Contemporary English*, by Randolph Quirk and Sidney Greenbaum.

*Elements of Style*, by William Strunk and E. B. White.

*Handbook for Writers*, by Celia Millward.

*Handbook of Technical Writing*, by Charles T. Brusaw, Gerald J. Alfred, and Walter E. Oliu.

*How to Write a Computer Manual: Handbook of Software Documentation*, by Johnathan Price.

*The Little, Brown Handbook*, by H. Ramsey.

*Modern American Usage*, by Wilson Follet.

*Modern English Usage*, H. W. Fowler.

*The Most Common Mistakes in English Usage*, by Thomas Elliot Barry.

*The Plain English Handbook*, by Martyn Walsh and Anna Kathleen Walsh.