

# Style Guide

The Mozilla Support Knowledge Base relies on clear writing that a reader can understand. Here's how to make your writing fit Mozilla Support.

## Titles

- Keep headers and titles short. But also make them descriptive enough so that the reader knows what the article is about. Too short titles can sometimes be too vague.
  - ✘ Private Browsing that allows you to prevent Firefox from saving your history
  - ✘ Private Browsing
  - ✓ Private Browsing - prevent Firefox from saving history
- When writing a header for a procedural step-by-step article, don't begin with the word "How." All procedurals show users how to do something. So if they all began with how, it might make alphabetizing the articles a challenge. Instead, use the verb that describes what you're showing readers to do.
  - ✘ How to Text Message in Firefox Chat
  - ✓ Text Messaging in Firefox Chat
  - ✓ Text Message in Firefox Chat

## Search Summary

- Keep search summaries short. Use as many keywords as you can at the beginning of a search summary.
  - ✘ This particular article is mostly about using Firefox for iOS but it contains some important information about Firefox for Android.
  - ✓ Learn to use Firefox for iOS and Firefox for Android.

## Article Body

- Use active voice instead of passive voice.
  - ✘ Keep the information needed by most people here.
  - ✓ Keep the information that most people need here.
- Don't be overly formal. Use friendly language.
  - ✘ If you do not save said file, the program may delete your work.
  - ✓ If you don't save the file, the program might delete your work.

- Although this language should create a warm atmosphere, don't use too much personality. Personality in technical writing can take up too much space. These documents should teach users how to do something more than entertain them.

✘ There's nothing more frustrating than finally finding the instructions you need and then getting stranded while looking through them.

✓ It's frustrating to find instructions you need and then become confused.

- If you ever need to talk about yourself in an article, use "we" rather than "I." Mozilla is an Open Source organization. That means that many people work on Mozilla and all its products. So writers are naturally a "we."

✘ Here I break out instructions into complete, numbered steps.

✓ Here we break out instructions into complete, numbered steps.

- If you want to talk directly to readers, use the word, "you."

✘ Users often feel frustrated at this point.

✓ You might feel frustrated at this point.

- Write numbers under ten as words.

✘ You can chat with up to 5 people.

✓ You can chat with up to five people.

- Write large numbers as numerals.

✘ Seven hundred fifty thousand one hundred twenty seven people saw this article.

✔ 750,127 people saw this article.

- Use the present tense even when something is about to happen in a procedure.

✘ Firefox notified you.

✘ Firefox will notify you.

✔ Firefox notifies you.

- Avoid absolutes. It's rare that something will always or never happen.

✘ We'll never share your private information.

✔ We won't share your private information.

- Avoid writing idioms and slang. Translators translate articles into various languages. Idioms make translation difficult.

✘ We try and pick their brains about which strategies work for them.

✔ We ask questions and try to find out which strategies work for them.

- Be consistent with words. Choose one word that means something and stick with it throughout the entire article. For example, click and press can be used interchangeably when talking about a keyboard. But choose either "click" or "press" and keep using that word. Don't vary it up to make things sound interesting.

✘ Press the home button. Then click the power key.

✔ Press the home button. Then press the power button.