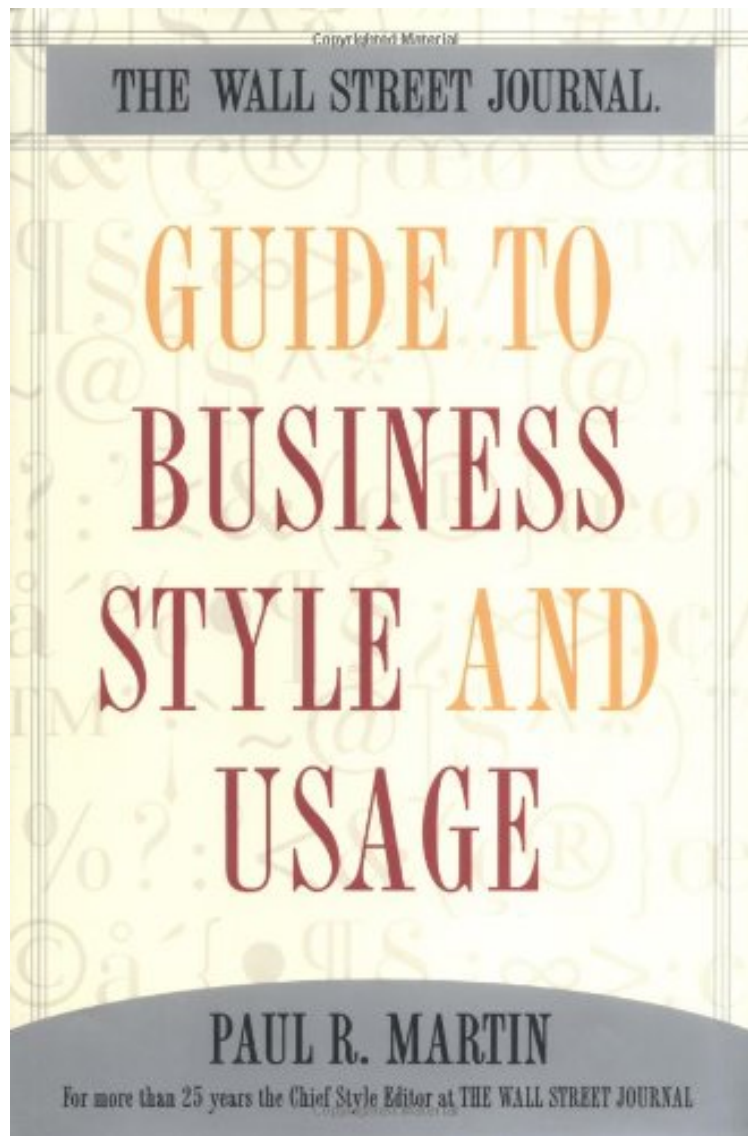


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The Wall Street Journal Guide to Business Style and Usage (Wall Street Journal Guides to...)

Paul Martin

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Paul Martin : The Wall Street Journal Guide to Business Style and Usage (Wall Street Journal Guides to...)

before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Wall Street Journal Guide to Business Style and Usage (Wall Street Journal Guides to...):

17 of 18 people found the following review helpful. Perfectly fine for what it is. By Zeldock As its title says, this book

is The Wall Street Journal's *style* guide and, to a lesser extent, a usage guide. A style guide is something specific to the book-magazine-newspaper publishing world: a volume that tells the writers and editors for a given publisher how they should handle certain recurring situations. ("Style" in this context refers to the mechanics of prose composition, not to a writer's individuality of expression.) Any style guide's main purposes are to promote consistency and to save the time that would otherwise be wasted in continually rethinking issues that the house has already decided. Whether the guide also promotes "good usage" in the sense of Strunk White or Fowler is almost irrelevant. A style guide is thus a series of more or less arbitrary decrees from the boss -- don't use a serial comma, don't put a comma before "Inc.," capitalize "The" in "The Wall Street Journal," etc. It's not the job of the typical style guide to explain why one usage is preferred over another or to give its user choices; rather, its job is to set forth the rules followed by a given publisher. The Wall Street Journal Guide to Business Style and Usage is exactly what its title suggests and a bit more. It tells you how The Wall Street Journal has answered the questions that, experience has shown, arise when writing about business. It doesn't debate the wisdom of hyphenating fractions, for example, but simply tells you, "This is how we do it at WSJ." In addition, it contains helpful definitions of business terms and (much less frequently) of grammatical terms. But, if you want a business dictionary or grammar book, then this should not be your first choice. You should buy this book if you write, or edit writing, about business, and you want to know how the world's foremost business publication handles the same problems you face.

7 of 10 people found the following review helpful. More a basic dictionary than a guide to style and usage
By P. Scott Pope
I was somewhat surprised that any publisher would consider this text a guide. Basically, it is formatted like a dictionary with various business-related vocabulary listings and their definitions. Usage applies to the spelling and capitalization of the listings. My expectations were that this book was similar to a Chicago Manual of Style within a business writing context that includes recently created words germane to the business world. Unfortunately, it isn't useful in this regard. For example, if you want to find out how to use colloquial business language such as "leverageable", you probably won't have much luck with this text as such words appear to be absent.... Lastly, the organization leaves something to be desired as the usage topics such as Abbreviations are mixed in with the vocabulary entries, which essentially is the entire book. I really see very little value in acquiring this book...
67 of 70 people found the following review helpful. Useful, But Not a First Choice
By A Customer
If you want to know the meaning of derivative claims, leveraged buyout, offshore buying units or Brady bonds, this is the book for you. If you need to know the definition or usage of the words Amish, tort, girl or the location of Exxon, then, by all means buy this book. But I don't know why anyone would want to spend \$30 (the standard price) for this book, put together by the Wall Street Journal's Paul R. Martin, because it is uneven, moving from the obvious (the word girl, for example), offering up tidbits of definitions of rather well-known words (the Amish) and the obscure (offshore buying units.) It is a book of multiple purposes or no clear purpose at all to the public. Internal stylebooks sometimes suffer from a fuzziness growing out of dual purposes, meant to fix the same errors that crop up regularly, to define the words most troublesome for that publication, to provide consistency in usage and presentation. Sometimes they are little more than a compilation of the memos issued by a copy desk or news editor, reminding people about the correct names of companies or the policies on datelines, or to remind editors on acceptable headline practices. Other times, stylebooks grow out of a sense of mission to guard the language from silliness and doublespeak while allowing the language to grow, as English does. What I didn't find in this book was the Journal's obvious ability to teach, as demonstrated in some other WSJ guides. While a stylebook doesn't have to take education as a mission, once it goes public, the educational component would seem to be essential. Why else would anyone not worried about whether to capitalize executive director buy this book? As an internal publication, the stylebook is useful. It sets standards and clearly tackles problem words, I'm sure fed by repeated misuses of certain words or facts by its own staff. I'd be willing to bet that the items on defuse/diffuse, or bizarre/bazaar, for example, are included because someone(s) on the staff has demonstrated confusion on their proper usage. This is no knock on the obvious effort that went into putting this book together. Virtually every editor I know flees in terror at the prospect of having to produce a stylebook for the company. But once it went public, it needed some more thought. I'd recommend this book to anyone who likes to collect style and language manuals, or people who need more sources of information on certain business terms. But I wouldn't rush out to buy this as a first choice on either language or business.

What is the difference between adjusted gross receipts and adjusted gross income? How about the differences among adopt, approve, enact and pass? And what the heck is the new name for Andersen Consulting? This go-to resource for these questions and more, gives the reader a competitive edge for succeeding in the world of business.

From Library Journal
Martin has been the copy desk chief at the Wall Street Journal since 1972 and has edited their internal style manual since 1981. Here he presents a public, updated, and expanded version that offers almost 3900 entries standardizing the terminology, spelling, punctuation, and grammar originally chosen for one of the world's best-known business newspapers. The aim is to produce the business equivalent of Fowler's Modern English Usage or Wilson Follett's Modern American Usage with shorter definitions and less wit. In fact, some words are listed without definitions, presumably to show the proper spelling. Over 900 cross references link italicized words with their own

entries, but many italicized words lack links. The grammar definitions are uncommonly clear, which may help explain why the Journal is so consistently well written. This guide is obviously trading on the Journal's name, which alone will generate some interest. Still, style and usage guides are used less and less, no matter how good they are; more's the pity. Academic and larger business collections may benefit from this selection. Patrick J. Brunet, Western Wisconsin Technical Coll. Lib., La Crosse Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. About the Author Paul R. Martin has been The Wall Street Journal's "high court" ruler on matters of style and usage for over a quarter of a century. He became Copy Desk Chief in 1972 and has compiled and edited The Wall Street Journal Stylebook since its first internal publication in 1981. Currently Assistant Managing Editor, he is also the news department's ombudsman for responding to readers' comments and complaints, and a final reader for major Journal stories. In 2000, Mr. Martin received the Elliott V. Bell Award from the New York Financial Writers' Association. The Bell Award is given each year to the person the association deems has made a significant, long-term contribution to the profession of financial journalism. A graduate of Dartmouth College and a native of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, he lives on Staten Island, New York.