

# a fine line

## STYLE SHEET

Updated July 2021 by Gail Ingram, Editor

The following is applicable to most pieces of writing sent to the editor for consideration, except quotations, excerpts, and poems. British/New Zealand spelling.

Please do not use the Oxford comma.

[\[Submission Guidelines\]](#)

### Abbreviation

- Full spelling on initial reference, followed by abbreviation in parenthesis, e.g. New Zealand Poetry Society (NZPS).
- *a fine line: afl* (mostly used in interviews)
- manuscript, manuscripts: ms, mss
- page, pages: (p.5), (pp.5-6)

### Apostrophes

- Singular: 's, e.g. Janet Frame's poetry, Ted Hughes's lines.
- Plural: s', e.g. Thanks to both books' success.

### Bio

- Written in the third person, e.g. Hone Tuwhare is a noted New Zealand poet of Māori ancestry.
- Maximum 30 words.

### Bold

- Questions in Q&A interviews
- To highlight a word or phrase as part of a list.

### Capitalisation

- *a fine line* is always uncapitalised.
- The following are capitalised: names, places (Southern Hemisphere), and words associated with events (Summer of Love, the Holocaust, and World War III).
- For titles:
  - capitalise the first and last word;
  - capitalise nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs; and finally
  - **do not** capitalise articles (the, a, an), prepositions (to, from...), or coordinating conjunctions (and, but).
- For section titles in poetry collections, anthologies and nonfiction works.
- For artworks, unless the artist specifies otherwise, capitalise and italicise.

## Dashes

- Use an en dash, with spaces on either side of the en dash:
  - to separate a longer clause from within a sentence;
  - as a variant to brackets
  - as a visual variant from serial comma usage
  - Use , for a time range, e.g. 7.30 – 10 pm; 10 am – 2 pm.
- Use an em dash:
  - for the poet's byline, e.g. — Selina Tusitala Marsh
  - without a space to indicate interruption, eg. Watch your—
- Use a hyphen for a range of years, e.g. 1990-2018.

## Dates and times

- No apostrophe for decades, e.g. 1950s, not 1950's.
- For **times**: use 5.30 pm, not 5:30 PM.
- For **time range**, use an en dash, e.g. 7.30–10 pm; 10 am – 2 pm.
- For **a range of years**, use a hyphen, e.g. 1990-2018.
- For **ages, by the decade**, use numerical values from 20s upwards, e.g. 'In my 30s', not 'In my thirties...'
- For **dates**: use day month year, e.g. 29 November 1974.
- For **centuries**: use this construction, e.g. '19th century' is unhyphenated for a designated time span, '22nd-century Aotearoa' when used as an adjective.
- For **dated and numbered events**: use this construction, e.g. 2018 Auckland Writers Festival, the 25th Annual Wellington Writers Walk.

## Diacritical marks and international words

- Macrons for Māori-language: Pākehā, Tāmaki, Tā moko, whānau
- Use as applicable for the language, eg. for French: à la, café, crème brûlée, née; for German: doppelgänger

## Editorial remarks and special formatting

- For closing remarks, such as publication information to accompany articles and poems, denote with a bullet point and italicise the publication's name:  
e.g. • first published in *takabē*, 2014.

## Ellipsis

- In quotations, place the ellipsis at the end of the word, with no space, e.g. She wrote, 'I loved Janet Frame's poems...'  
in a letter to her sister.
- If the quotation continues, add the ellipsis followed by a space on either side, e.g. 'These lines are particularly memorable: 'I saw the Māori Jesus / Walking on Wellington Harbour. ... His breath smelled of mussels and paraoa' and worth examining more closely.

## Font / typeface

- Please use Garamond, size 12, or another plain font.

## Format (Reviews)

### For books:

*Title.* Author of book (City: Name of Press, Year of Publication). ISBN Number.  
RRP \$ amount. Number of pp (pages).

### For journals and serial publications:

*Title of journal.* *Number of journal.* Edited by Name (2015). ISSN: Number. \$NZ /  
a year subscription. Number of pp (pages).

...followed by

Reviewed by Name

Review itself (circa 500 words minimum, excluding quotations).

**NB:** Discuss what you enjoyed about the book/publication, giving enough information for others to decide whether they want to read it. While it is fine to note what didn't work for you, we wish to avoid printing entirely negative reviews.

Publications for review are available from [the Bookshelf](#).

## Full stops

- Omitted in names, e.g. XJ Kennedy, not X. J. Kennedy.

## Hyphenation/no hyphenation

- **Hyphenated:**
  - Examples: Bi-monthly. Built-in. Cover-to-cover. COVID-19. In-jokes. Micro-reviews. Part-time. Poet-in-residence. Re-reading. Self-harm. Self-help. Skin-picking. Touch-typing. Vice-versa. Writer-in-Residence.
- **Not hyphenated:**
  - Examples: childrearing, commonsense, commonplace, couchsurf, email, fainthearted, lifestyle, longlisted, meatspace, nonfiction, online, proofreading, shortlisted, snail mail, standalone, unthemed, widescreen, wordplay

## Internet

- Email, not e-mail
- Internet is capitalised.
- **Email addresses:** prefer unpunctuated and placed at the end of a paragraph, e.g. Please email William Shakespeare, sonnets@billshakespeare.net
- **Website addresses:** please remove http:// and https:// at the beginning of addresses, checking the link still works.

## Interviews and reviews

- When referring to an interviewee, use their full name in the first instance, and their last name in subsequent instances.
- Initials for interviewer (e.g. **af1**)

## Italics

- Titles of books, journals and magazines, films, plays, artworks
- For emphasis, e.g. She *loves* iambic pentameter.

## Numbers

- Spelled out, from one to ten, e.g. She completed three poems.
- Spelled out, when starting a sentence, e.g. Two hundred people attended the book launch.
- Numerical from 11 upwards, e.g. She drafted 11 more poems.
- Comma for thousands, e.g. 1,574 poetry mss. *Not* 1574 poetry mss.

## Paragraphs

- No indentation on paragraphs. Make a paragraph by pressing Return two times.
- No spaces at start of paragraphs.

## Parenthesis / square brackets

- Use parentheses ( ) for parenthetical remarks and bibliographic information.
- Square brackets [ ] are reserved for editorial remarks.

## Poems

Depending on the poem, and where possible...

- When quoting **three lines or more**, indent it, like so:

She walks in beauty, like the night.  
Of cloudless climes and starry skies  
And all that's best of dark and bright.  
Meet in her aspect and her eyes;  
("She Walks in Beauty")

- When quoting **only one or two lines**, use these in-sentence and with **single** quotation marks, e.g.

Her poem echoes Byron's lines: 'She walks in beauty like the night / Of cloudless climes and starry skies' ("She Walks in Beauty").

When quoting visual, concrete or spatially-oriented poetry, please...

- Mimic and preserve the spacing and lineation as closely as possible.
- Use the spacebar, not the tab key.
- Make a note to editorial staff in an email.
- Single backslash / with a space on either side to indicate a line break.
- Double backslash // with a space on either side to indicate a stanza break.

For prose poems, the editor favours a justified alignment.

## Quotation marks

- Double quotation marks for titles of poems, e.g. “The Māori Jesus”.
- Single quotation marks for quotations (“Of cloudless climes and starry skies”), and in reported speech, e.g. She said, ‘Let’s go to the poetry reading.’
- When a quoted word or phrase concludes a sentence, place the punctuation outside the quotation marks, e.g. She called it ‘great poetry’.
- If reported speech continues over multiple paragraphs, place an opening quotation mark at the start of every paragraph, with the closing quotation mark placed only in the last quoted paragraph, e.g.

‘... She rarely used assonantal rhyme in her poems, though a few appear in *The Goose Bath*.

‘As it is always worth noting when she does use this technique, I will explore further the reasons why she did so...’

- If you wish to emphasise a word or a phrase within a quotation, please use italics, not quotation marks, making sure to add the following note at the end of the sentence: “(emphasis mine)”, or similar.

## Spacing

- One space only after punctuation (full stops, commas, colons, semi-colons etc).

## Spelling and words spelled out

- British/New Zealand spelling, e.g. **humour**, not humor; **prioritise**, not prioritize. Please use **okay**, and not OK or other variants.