

Student Supplement for  
*The SBL Handbook of Style*

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## PART 1

### AVOIDING COMMON MISTAKES

#### 1.1 GETTING STARTED

Become familiar with the styles for notes and bibliographies illustrated in *The SBL Handbook of Style (SBLHS)*. These general (*SBLHS* 7.2) and special (*SBLHS* 7.3) examples have been chosen with care to cover the broadest array of resources. The handbook provides sample entries for the initial citation of a work in a footnote, subsequent citations of that work, and an example of the bibliographic entry.

When conducting research, check the title page of a source and carefully record *all pertinent bibliographic information*. Frustrations arise when students are preparing a manuscript and realize they are missing key pieces of information. In addition to the author and title of the work, students should record the editor, translator, number of volumes, edition, series, city, publisher, and date.

The following material will address problems students typically encounter when working with biblical texts and secondary literature. These illustrations will help one avoid problems, but they do not replace the need to become familiar with the examples provided in *SBLHS*.

#### 1.2 BIBLICAL CITATIONS (*SBLHS* 8.2)

Citations of modern Bible versions do not require publisher's information in either footnotes or bibliography; instead, use standard abbreviations for the Bible version (e.g., NRSV, RSV, NIV, NASB; see *SBLHS* 8.2). The SDA Theological Seminary assumes you are using the KJV unless stated otherwise. If citing Scripture from a single version, include the abbreviation of the version following the chapter and verse on the first Scripture reference only. When citing more than one version in a paper, include the version after each citation.

“Now Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria” (2 Kgs 10:1 NRSV).

When citing specific chapters and verses, use the standard abbreviated titles of biblical books provided in *SBLHS* 8.3.1–3. 3. If a biblical book is the first word of the sentence, do not abbreviate the title. Also, when referring to the book as a whole or a person with the same name as a biblical book, do not abbreviate. Do not use abbreviations in subheads, titles of chapters, or title of dissertation.

Right: Revelation 3 begins with the letter to the church in Sardis.  
We know little about the historical Habakkuk.

Wrong: Rev 3 begins with the letter to the church in Sardis.  
We know little about the historical Hab.

Cite Bible verses with chapter and verse(s) using arabic numerals separated by a colon. Do not write out the numbers.

Right: John 5:8–9

Wrong: John chapter five verses eight and nine.

When citing multiple passages, list the abbreviated title of each *new* biblical book followed by the chapter number and colon, with all verses in that chapter separated by a comma and space. A semicolon should separate references to subsequent chapters or books. Do not include the conjunction “and” or an ampersand before the last citation. List passages in canonical and numerical order.

Right: Matt 2:3; 3:4–6; 4:3, 7; Luke 3:6, 8; 12:2, 5; Acts 15:1–5; Rom 1:8–12

Wrong: Luke 3:6, 8; Luke 12:2

Matt 2:3, 3:4–6; 4:3; Luke 3:6, 8 and 12:2

Rom 1:8–12; Matt 2:3; 4:3, 7; 3:4–6

Note that the “en” dash is used in the above examples, not an “em” dash or hyphen. Further examples of correct and incorrect citations are listed in *SBLHS* 8.2.

In study Bibles such as *The HarperCollins Study Bible* or *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, special articles and the notes (usually at the bottom of the page) are *not* part of the biblical text. Study notes are written by authors or editors whose names are included in the front matter of the study Bible. If these notes are cited, all the relevant information from the specific study Bible should be included.

<sup>3</sup> Sophie Laws, “The Letter of James” in *The HarperCollins Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version, with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books* (ed. Wayne A. Meeks et al.; New York: HarperCollins, 1993), 2269–70.

<sup>5</sup> Laws, “James,” 2270. (If Laws has only one work listed in your bibliography, then “Laws, 2270,” would be sufficient.)

Laws, Sophie. “The Letter of James.” Pages 2269–70 in *The HarperCollins Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version, with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books*. Edited by Wayne A. Meeks et al. New York: HarperCollins, 1993.

## 1.3 WORKING WITH BIBLICAL COMMENTARIES

### 1.3.1 SERIES TITLE AND VOLUME TITLE

Most biblical commentaries appear as part of a commentary series, the purpose of which is to comment upon the biblical text using the same general format. When working with a single volume in a commentary series, follow the citation guidelines for “A Work in a Series” (*SBLHS* 7.2.22). Most commentary series are listed in the abbreviations found in *SBLHS* 8.4.1–2.

When collecting bibliographic information, distinguish carefully between the volume title and the series title. Whether abbreviated or written in full, volume titles are italicized, but series titles are not.

<sup>18</sup> Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12–36* (trans. John J. Scullion; CC; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 25.

<sup>20</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 44.

Westermann, Claus. *Genesis 12–36*. Translated by John J. Scullion. Continental Commentaries. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995.

### 1.3.2 NUMBERED SERIES OR NONNUMBERED SERIES

The publishers of some biblical commentaries number each volume in the series, while others do not. If the series uses numbers (e.g., Anchor Bible and Word Biblical Commentary), the number goes immediately after the name of the series but does not include the word “volume” or its abbreviations.

Right: Word Biblical Commentary 12  
WBC 12

Wrong: Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 12  
WBC, vol. 12.

### 1.3.3 MULTIVOLUME COMMENTARIES

#### 1.3.3.1 Multivolume Commentaries on a Single Biblical Book by One Author

Usually, each volume has a separate title for the books and chapters treated in a given volume: for example, Wenham’s two-volume commentary on Genesis in the Word Biblical Commentary. The title of one volume is *Genesis 1–15* and the other is *Genesis 16–50*. In other cases, each volume uses the same title and is distinguished only by volume

number, using either roman or arabic numerals. The following example of Dahood's three-volume Psalms commentary is taken from *SBLHS* 7.3.10.

If the paper references all three volumes, cite the entire multivolume work.

<sup>4</sup> Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms* (3 vols.; AB 16–17A; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1965–1970), 3:127.

<sup>7</sup> Dahood, *Psalms*, 2:121.

Dahood, Mitchell. *Psalms*. 3 vols. Anchor Bible 16–17A. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1965–1970.

If the paper uses only one or two of the three volumes, cite each volume individually.

<sup>78</sup> Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms I, 1–50* (AB 16; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1965), 44.

<sup>80</sup> Dahood, *Psalms I, 1–50*, 78.

<sup>82</sup> Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms II, 51–100* (AB 17; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1968), 347.

<sup>86</sup> Dahood, *Psalms II, 51–100*, 351.

Dahood, Mitchell. *Psalms I, 1–50*. Vol. 1 of *Psalms*. Anchor Bible 16. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1965.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Psalms II, 51–100*. Vol. 2 of *Psalms*. Anchor Bible 17. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1968.

### 1.3.3.2 Multivolume Commentaries for the Entire Bible by Multiple Authors

To save space, multivolume commentaries often combine treatments of multiple biblical books in a single volume. A different author usually writes the commentary on each biblical book. In this case, treat each author's commentary like a chapter in a book written by several authors (*SBLHS* 7.2.21).

Multivolume commentaries cited in a footnote should use the abbreviated title listed in *SBLHS* 8.4.1–22. The author of the section should still be cited.

<sup>1</sup> Patrick D. Miller, *NIB* 6:577.

Miller, Patrick D. "The Book of Jeremiah: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections." Pages 553–926 in *Introduction to Prophetic Literature, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel*. Vol. 6 of *New Interpreter's Bible*. Edited by Leander E. Keck. Nashville: Abingdon, 2001.

#### 1.3.4 SINGLE-VOLUME COMMENTARIES ON THE ENTIRE BIBLE

Check the resource carefully. Some single-volume commentaries are written by a single person and are thus cited like any other monograph. Others are edited volumes where more than one person has written the commentary on individual books. In these cases, cite the author of that section of the commentary as you would the chapter in a book with an editor (*SBLHS* 7.2.12).

<sup>5</sup> Jack G. Partain, "Numbers," in *Mercer Commentary on the Bible* (ed. Watson E. Mills et al.; Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1995), 175–79.

<sup>8</sup> Partain, "Numbers," 175.

Partain, Jack G. "Numbers." Pages 175–79 in *Mercer Commentary on the Bible*. Edited by Watson E. Mills et al. Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1995.

#### 1.3.5 SERIES WITH NEW NUMBERS

Occasionally a publisher will restart the numbering of a journal or a series for a variety of reasons. When this happens, include the number of the new series, separated from the volume number by a forward slash as illustrated in *SBLHS* 7.2.22.

### 1.4 BIBLE DICTIONARIES AND ENCYCLOPEDIAS

Cite the author of the article, not the editor of the work as a whole (*SBLHS* 7.2.28). Most Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias put the author's name at the end of the article that he or she wrote. If multiple articles from the same source are used, cite the author and article individually in the footnotes.

<sup>1</sup> Stanley D. Walters, "Jacob Narrative," *ABD* 3:599–609.

Walters, Stanley D. "Jacob Narrative." Pages 359–609 in vol. 3 of *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.

When multiple articles from the same dictionary or encyclopedia have been used, list the work as a whole under the editor in the bibliography.

Freedman, David Noel, ed. *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.

## 1.5 ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviate titles of standard works in footnotes, but cite the complete titles in the bibliography. The *SBL Handbook of Style* offers two extensive lists of abbreviations for journals, series, and other standard reference works. The first abbreviation list is alphabetized by the source (*SBLHS* 8.4.1) and the second by the abbreviation (*SBLHS* 8.4.2). If the work you are citing is in these lists, use the standard abbreviation listed. Note that both lists italicize abbreviations of journal titles (e.g., *JBL*) but do not italicize the abbreviations of series (e.g., JSOTSup) or names (e.g., BAGD).

Footnotes:     *JBL*  
                  JSOTSup  
                  BAGD

Bibliography: *Journal of Biblical Literature*  
                  Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series  
                  Bauer, W., W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker.  
                  *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and*  
                  *Other Early Christian Literature*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Chicago:  
                  University of Chicago Press, 1979.

Include a list of all abbreviations used in the List of Abbreviations.

## 1.6 CITATIONS OF ELECTRONIC SOURCES

Students should consult the detailed instructions for documenting CD-ROM and Internet resources in *SBLHS* 7.3.12–14. List electronic sources by the author's name, and enclose the title of the webpage in quotation marks, as you would a journal article. Since pagination will change from printer to printer, do not cite page numbers for online resources; instead, include "n.p." in footnotes and "No pages" in the bibliography. Many websites change their content frequently, so be sure to include the date the resource was



accessed and provide the most detailed URL available—one that accesses the specific document rather than home or menu pages. Retain copies of downloaded material until you have defended your dissertation.

<sup>7</sup> Joel Green, “Bible, Theology and Theological Interpretation,” *SBL Forum*, n.p. [cited 16 Sept. 2004]. Online: <http://www.sbl-site.org/Article.aspx?ArticleId=308>.

<sup>9</sup> Green, “Bible, Theology.”

Green, Joel B. “Bible, Theology and Theological Interpretation.” *SBL Forum*. No pages. Cited 16 September 2004. Online: <http://www.sbl-site.org/Article.aspx?ArticleId=308>.

Choose and evaluate web resources carefully. Generally, websites hosted by educational institutions (.edu) are more reliable than sites hosted by companies (.com) that are trying to sell products or organizations (.org) that may aggressively promote ideological agendas.

## 1.7 TRANSLITERATING GREEK AND HEBREW WORDS

- If the student has skills in biblical languages, it is preferable to use a Greek or Hebrew font when discussing particular words. When citing Hebrew, use only the consonantal text unless the vowel pointing is necessary for the argument.

- The *SBL Handbook of Style* provides two different transliteration options for Hebrew: (1) the “academic style” (*SBLHS* 5.1.1), which makes extensive use of diacritical markings to distinguish subtle differences in sounds, and (2) the “general-purpose style” (*SBLHS* 5.1.2). Only one transliteration system is provided for Greek (*SBLHS* 5.3). The general-purpose style (*SBLHS* 5.1.2) may be adequate for term papers. For transliteration in theses and dissertations, consult the dissertation advisor regarding which of the two styles is appropriate.

- Students should be careful when quoting references that contain transliterations to reproduce these exactly as they appeared in the original. (Transliteration styles vary widely among publishers.)

- Fonts for working with Greek and Hebrew are available for download from the SBL website (<http://www.sbl-site.org>; click on the “Resources” tab at the top of the page). Available fonts include those with Hebrew and Greek characters and fonts with all the transliteration symbols.

## **PART 2**

### **FORMATTING GUIDELINES FOR DISSERTATIONS**

#### **2.1 MARGINS**

Use a 1½-inch setting for left margin; all others are 1 inch. Set tabs at one-half inch throughout. Do not justify the right margin. All the samples in Part 3 of this “Student Supplement” follow the dissertation style and are set with a ragged right margin.

#### **2.2 SPACING**

Double-space all main text except for block quotations. These long quotations (five lines or more) should be single-spaced, indented one-half inch, and set off from the main text by a double space. Do not enclose a block quotation with quotation marks. See the examples in part 3 and *SBLHS* 4.1.7. For footnotes, see section 2.8 below.

Triple-space before subheads.

Triple-space between the header CHAPTER 1 and the TITLE OF THE CHAPTER. Triple space after the TITLE OF THE CHAPTER and the first line of text or the first subhead—whichever comes first.

Double-space a two-line title. Single-space a three-, four-, or five-line title.

Single-space a two-line subhead.

#### **2.3 PAGINATION**

- Page numbers go at the bottom center of the page.
- Half-title pages (that come before Appendix and the Bibliography) are counted but the page number does not show.
  - Assign each page a number. Arabic numbers are used for the main text of the paper. Roman numerals are used for the preliminary pages, beginning with the Table of Contents, which is page iii, unless you have a Dedication (optional). In this case, the Table of Contents is page iv and the Dedication, page iii. The pages before the Table of Contents (or Dedication) are not numbered.
    - Page numbers should appear without any embellishments and should match the font used for the dissertation.

## **2.4 TEXT FORMAT**

Use a 11- to 12-point scalable font. Chapter titles and title page should be the same size and type as the text font. Do not use bold styling except for levels 1, 3, and 5 of subheadings.

## **2.5 HEADINGS AND SUBHEADINGS**

- Primary heading: Centered, all capital letters, long titles single-spaced;  
two-line titles double-spaced
- Level 1 subheading: Centered, boldface, capitalized “headline” style
- Level 2 subheading: Centered, capitalized “headline” style (no bold)
- Level 3 subheading: On the left margin, boldface, capitalized “headline” style
- Level 4 subheading: On the left margin, all lower case except first word and  
proper nouns (“sentence” style); no bold or italics
- Level 5 subheading: Indented like a paragraph; capitalize first word and  
proper nouns (“sentence” style); boldface; ends  
with a period. Runs in to first sentence.

See Part 3 below for examples.

## **2.6 CONTENTS PAGE**

Begin TABLE OF CONTENTS 2 inches from top of page. At least three levels of subheads must be included in the Contents and these subheads should correspond *precisely* with those used in the body of the paper. The subheads are indented to reflect the levels of subheads used.

## **2.7 TITLE PAGE**

Center all elements, allowing 2 inches at the top and bottom margins, and approximately 2 inches between each element. See Part 3 for content format.

## **2.8 FOOTNOTES**

For most word-processing software, 10-point font is the default setting for footnotes. Footnotes in 10-point font are acceptable for dissertations, provided that the font type is consistent with the normal text of the paper. The footnotes are placed at the “Bottom of the Page”—usually the default in most software.

- Separate text and footnotes with a short rule of 2 inches (footnote separator line). A footnote separator line that runs across the whole page when a footnote is continued is not acceptable.

- Indent the superscripted number one-half inch, with subsequent lines of the citation justified to the left margin.
- Insert one space between the number and the footnote text.
- Separate each entry with a single space.
- Numbers begin with “1” for each new chapter.
- In the text, the footnote number should come at the end of the sentence, if possible.
- Students should cite all publishing information available for each source. The order for listing publishing information in notes is: editor, translator, number of volumes, edition, series, city, publisher, and date.
- If you cite two or more works by the same author, subsequent notes should include the author’s family name and a shortened title of each work. If an author has only one work in your dissertation, then use only the surname and page number for subsequent notes.

<sup>7</sup> John Van Seters, *Prologue to History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 115.

<sup>9</sup> Van Seters, *Prologue*, 150.

- Be aware that there is a difference between *reference* notes and *content* notes. See Turabian 8.149. In a footnote, the source of material included in a content note may be worked into a sentence or may follow as a separate item. “Content notes provide information that could disrupt or unnecessarily complicate the text.” They “may point out a contrast or discrepancy, give further explanations, or indicate sources for further study.”<sup>1</sup>

## 2.9 BIBLICAL REFERENCES

Publication data for biblical versions are not required in footnotes and bibliographies; simply indicate the version cited in parentheses following the quote. Always use the abbreviated form (e.g., NRSV, NIV, NJPS) listed in *SBLHS* 8.2. If only one version is cited throughout the paper, include the version after the first quotation only. If more than one version is cited, identify the version after each quotation.

## 2.10 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Use a 2-inch top margin. List all sources consulted in alphabetical order, with a blank line between single-spaced entries. The bibliography follows the appendix(es) and is

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<sup>1</sup>Nancy Jean Vyhmeister, *Quality Research Papers for Students of Religion and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 63.

numbered consecutively. A source cannot be continued to the next page. See sample bibliography in Part 3.

## **PART 3**

### **SAMPLES**

The following pages provide further aids for dissertation formatting and style. Students should consult Andrews University's *Standards for Written Work*, pages 37-52, for a fuller scope of sample style sheets.

*Samples*  
*3.1 Title Page*

(allow 2½-inch top margin)

Andrews University  
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

(begin title 4 inches from top)

TITLE OF PAPER

*(a 2-line title is double-spaced;  
a 3-line title, or more,  
is single-spaced)*

(begin element 6 inches from top)

A Dissertation  
Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

(begin element 8½ inches from top)

by  
[Your Name]  
[Month Year]

*(use same form of name as  
on other preliminary pages)*

*Samples*  
*3.2 Table of Contents*

(2-inch top margin)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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First-level subhead. . . . .	5
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*Note:* Leader dots are spaced every other space and line up with dots above and below. Every entry must have at least 1 leader dot. Numbers line up flush right. A space of 1/4 inch occurs between last dot and first digit of longest number. If arabic numbers are used to designate chapters, use arabic numbers in Table of Contents.



(2-inch top margin for the first page only)

## CHAPTER 1

(primary heading)

TWO-LINE TITLES ARE DOUBLE-SPACED AND THREE-  
LINE TITLES, OR LONGER, ARE SINGLE-SPACED  
ON SUBSEQUENT LINES

The top margin is 2 inches for the first page only; thereafter it returns to 1 inch. There are two blank lines between the title of the chapter and the text (or subheading if there is one). If the title of the chapter (primary heading) is two lines or longer, it is “V” shaped: The top line is the longest, and each succeeding line is a little smaller. The right and bottom margins are 1 inch. All main text should be set in a standard 11- or 12-point font, such as Times New Roman.

### **First-Level Subheading**

Keep two blank lines between the text of the preceding section and a subheading, regardless of the level. The only exception to this is when two subheadings come together with no intervening text. A first-level subheading is centered, bold, and capitalized headline style. Center subheads and titles may not exceed 4¾ inches in width.

### Second-Level Subheading

There are two blank lines between the text of the preceding section and the subheading. A second-level subheading is centered and capitalized headline style.

### **Third-Level Subheading**

A third level subheading is on the left margin, in bold, and is capitalized headline style. A subheading should never be the last text on a page. If necessary, add extra blank space at the end of the page and begin the following page with the subheading.

Students may choose to omit level-2 subheadings, using, for instance, levels 1, 3, and 4, or levels 1, 3, and 5. However, once level-2 subhead has been omitted, it cannot be picked up in later chapters.

Margin subheadings may not extend beyond mid-page. If the subhead carries over to two lines (or more), the left side is flush with the left margin; the right is arranged in a “V” shape, or what is also called “inverted pyramid style.”

### Fourth-level subheading

A fourth-level subheading is on the left margin, written in sentence style (i.e., with only the first word and proper nouns capitalized). The text of the body of the paper is double-spaced except for blocked quotations.

This is a blocked quotation. It should consist of five or more lines of text and be indented one-half inch. Block quotations should be single-spaced. No quotation marks are used at the beginning or the end of the quote. Double quotation marks within the original matter are retained. The blocked quote is set off by a regular double space before and after the quote. Note that regular spacing resumes after the end of the quotation.<sup>2</sup>

**Fifth-level subheading.** This subheading is the only one of the five that ends with a period. It is written in “sentence” style, in boldface, *indented*, and runs into the

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<sup>2</sup> The first line of a footnote is indented one-half inch. A 10-point font is acceptable. Footnotes—unlike the main text of the paper—should be single-spaced.

paragraph.

*Writing tip:* Do not end a paragraph with a quotation. Use the last sentence in the paragraph to make your final point, summarize the paragraph, or transition into the next paragraph.

Footnotes at the bottom of the page are separated by a 2-inch rule.<sup>3</sup> Maintain subsequent numbering in notes for each chapter; in other words, each new chapter begins with #1 in the footnotes. Make sure a footnote and the text to which it refers are on the same page. When a word processor such as Microsoft Word does not accomplish this automatically, adjust the line spacing to “exactly” on the “paragraph” window.

---

<sup>3</sup> There should be a blank line between each note and a blank en-space between the number and the first word of the note.

*Samples*  
*3.4 Appendixes*

(2-inch top margin)

APPENDIX 1

APPENDIX TITLE

The appendix contains materials that are not essential to the dissertation but that are useful to the reader. Each appendix should have a number and a title, unless there is only one appendix, in which case the appendix would not need a number. Every appendix requires a heading. Therefore, if you are including a preexisting document you will need to prepare a half-title page that appears before the document, which includes the appendix number and title. The half-title page is counted, but the number does not show. This is the number that appears on the Table of Contents page.

An appendix is formatted like the first page of a chapter, using a 2-inch top margin. Page numbers go at the bottom center of the page. If the appendix is already numbered, put the new page numbers in square brackets. Page numbering for the appendixes is consecutive with the rest of the paper.

Margins for the appendixes should be the same as the rest of the paper, if possible. You may need to reduce the content of the appendix to fit the margins.

*Samples*  
*3.5 Bibliography*

(2-inch top margin)

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

There should be two blank lines between the title and the first entry. The first line of each entry is justified to the left margin; subsequent lines are indented one-half inch. See the *SBLHS* 7.2–4 for samples of the correct format. The bibliography goes after the appendixes (if any) and is numbered consecutively.

A bibliography consists of one list of the sources—alphabetical, by author—you consulted or cited in the paper. Separate the entries with one blank line. The entries themselves are single-spaced. Do not use abbreviations for titles of books, journals, or series in the bibliography.