

AMA Manual of Style

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Modifiers (Noun Strings)

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Although in English nouns can be used as modifiers, overuse of noun modifiers can lead to a lack of clarity. Purists may demand stricter rules on usage, but, as with the use of nouns as verbs (see , Correct and Preferred Usage, Back-formations), the process of linguistic change is inevitable, and grammatical rigor must be tempered by judgment and common sense. In *The Careful Writer*, Bernstein advises the use of no more than 2 polysyllabic noun modifiers per noun for the sake of clarity. However, long noun strings are sometimes difficult to avoid. If several of the attributive nouns are