

AMA Manual of Style

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Idioms, Colloquialisms, and Slang

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Some language is best avoided in material written for a professional or academic audience. Idioms are fixed expressions that cannot be understood literally (kick the bucket, on a roll, put up with, pay attention). In addition, some may have multiple meanings that can be understood only in context (pass out, stand for). Idioms are not governed by any rules and each stands on its own. Be wary of using idioms, particularly for audiences that include readers whose first language is not English. Colloquialisms (or casualisms) are characteristic of informal, casual communication (ain't, anyways, cold turkey, flat line, OK, shell-shocked, tax