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Welcome

Welcome to the Splunk Style Guide

The Splunk Style Guide is the writing style reference for Splunk documentation and is intended for anyone who writes or edits customer-facing content. Refer to the Splunk Style Guide when you develop content for Splunk docs or write text for a Splunk product.

The Splunk Style Guide is a document in motion, so check the Latest changes to the Splunk Style Guide for recent updates.

For style issues that aren't covered in this guide, see Where to look if the Splunk Style Guide doesn't answer your question.

Questions, comments, or feedback about the Splunk Style Guide

If you have questions, comments, or feedback about the Splunk Style Guide, send us your thoughts using the Was this topic useful? form at the bottom of any page.

Latest changes to the Splunk Style Guide

This table shows the history of updates to the Splunk Style Guide since its publication on December 2, 2019:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Chapter or topic</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 26, 2020</td>
<td>See also section</td>
<td>Added new topic: See also section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 26, 2020</td>
<td>Next step section</td>
<td>Added new topic: Next step section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 26, 2020</td>
<td>Usage dictionary</td>
<td>Added &quot;AM&quot; and &quot;PM&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 22, 2020</td>
<td>Usage dictionary</td>
<td>Clarified guidance for &quot;*nix&quot;, &quot;Linux&quot;, and &quot;UNIX&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Chapter or topic</td>
<td>Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 22, 2020</td>
<td>Usage dictionary</td>
<td>Added &quot;blacklist&quot; and &quot;whitelist&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 13, 2020</td>
<td>Write a task</td>
<td>Added guidance around conditional steps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 13, 2020</td>
<td>Usage dictionary</td>
<td>Added &quot;into&quot;. Also added a correct usage example to the Manual names, topic titles, and section headings topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 13, 2020</td>
<td>Usage dictionary</td>
<td>Added &quot;reenable&quot; and revised the entry for &quot;reenter&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 24, 2020</td>
<td>Usage dictionary</td>
<td>Clarified &quot;multivalue field&quot;. Updated &quot;plugin&quot; as a noun or adjective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 19, 2020</td>
<td>Example names and domains</td>
<td>Updated IP address blocks to be ranges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 9, 2020</td>
<td>Numbers or numerals?</td>
<td>Added guidance around duration of time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 5, 2020</td>
<td>Write in indicative or imperative mood</td>
<td>Updated title and guidance to emphasize writing in indicative and imperative mood and to avoid writing in subjunctive mood. Added new examples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 19, 2020</td>
<td>Usage dictionary</td>
<td>Added &quot;spin up, spin down&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 18, 2020</td>
<td>Formatting quick reference Brackets</td>
<td>Clarified language and examples for square brackets around .conf file stanza names.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 5, 2020</td>
<td>Usage dictionary</td>
<td>Added &quot;directory&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 31, 2020</td>
<td>Usage dictionary</td>
<td>Added &quot;drilldown&quot; as an adjective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 23, 2019</td>
<td>Usage dictionary</td>
<td>Added &quot;tarball&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 12, 2019</td>
<td>Commas and decimals</td>
<td>Added clarification to use standard American-style formatting for commas and decimal points in numbers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A word about Splunk docs

A word about Splunk docs

Splunk documentation comes in a variety of forms and topic types. The Splunk docs set includes step-by-step instructions, conceptual content, reference guides, troubleshooting pages, use cases, and product tutorials.

Every topic type has a clear and honest focus on the user. By providing relevant information that guides a reader through a process or goal, Splunk docs help users become productive and confident when they use Splunk software.

To support this goal, Splunk documentation follows these principles:

- Focus on the user, not on the product or a feature.
- Include only the information a user needs to accomplish their goal.
- Write in direct, plain language.
- Include rich examples that help users understand complicated concepts or complex procedures.

User-focused

Readers look for content that applies to their situation, so Splunk docs avoid describing what the product or UI does and instead focus on what the user can do.

Apply the following guidelines to help keep Splunk docs user-focused:

- Consider assumptions about the audience's knowledge level. Write documentation at the level of understanding the user has, but don't assume that terms and concepts are commonplace.
- Construct sentences that explain what the user can do with the product, not what the product lets the user do.
- Consider a reader's reason for using the documentation and focus the documentation on their goal rather than detailing every aspect of what engineering built.

Goal-oriented

Readers have more interest in achieving a goal than reading about a feature's capabilities. Splunk docs show a user how to complete goals and solve real-world problems.

Apply the following guidelines to help keep Splunk docs goal-oriented:

- Identify your audience and know their needs before you plan your content.
- Describe prerequisites or background information about the feature that a user needs in order to achieve their goal.
- Include only the information that offers value to the reader in achieving what they set out to do. Link judiciously to supporting material or additional information.

Straightforward

Readers don't read a manual from start to finish. Instead, they look for a title that matches their scenario, and then they scan the content for digestible information or relevant examples. Splunk docs have titles that are descriptive and tasks that are written in plain language.
Apply the following guidelines to help keep Splunk docs straightforward:

- Title your topic and section headings in a way that readers can find the information they need.
- Write directly and in plain language. Avoid unnecessary technical language.
- Don’t use industry-speak or jargon. Remember that people read Splunk docs all over the world and have varying reading comprehension levels.

For more information about writing in Splunk tone, see Tone. For guidance on topic titles, see Manual names, topic titles, and section headings.

Rich in examples

Readers look for examples that illustrate abstract concepts or complex procedures. Splunk docs have two types of examples that are relevant, helpful, and tailored to its target audience.

Inline examples
An inline example follows an abstract concept or complex procedure. Inline examples clarify meaning instead of making a reference to an obscure analogy. A typical inline example starts with "For example,” and includes a brief statement that describes a relevant scenario for the user.

Extended examples
An extended example walks a user through a common use case. Extended examples can contain relevant and up-to-date images. A typical extended example takes the form of a subheader labeled “Example” that stands on its own in a topic.
Usage dictionary

The following list outlines terms to use and avoid in Splunk documentation.

* 
*nix

Use to refer to both UNIX and Linux together. If only one system is supported, use “UNIX” or “Linux”.

A

above
Don't use to refer to a location in a UI or document. Directional or visual instructions are unhelpful to visually impaired users. Use “higher” to refer to versions of software.

actually
Don't use.

ad hoc
An unscheduled search. Don't use any other term for a search that a user launches manually. This is opposed to a search that runs programmatically or on a schedule. In references not about an unscheduled search, use “if needed”. Don't use Latin abbreviations or terms.

add-on
Include a hyphen. The plural form is "add-ons". The term takes a definite article, and you can write it as "the add-on" after the first instance of the full name of the add-on. Use the term "add-on" when you are writing about a technical add-on (TA), supported add-on (SA), or domain add-on (DA) in Splunk docs. See add-on in the Spllexicon.

Correct
add-on
Add-on
the add-on
the Splunk Add-on for [name of third-party vendor]

Incorrect
add-On
Add-On
addon
AddOn

allows you to
Don't use. Use “lets you” if you're writing about the product, otherwise make the content user-focused.

AM
Write with capital letters and without periods. Use to mean between midnight and 11:59 in the morning when writing the time of day. See 12-hour clock.

and/or
Don't use. Pick the word that best fits the sentence.

anti
  Don't include a hyphen.
Correct
  antivirus

at present
  Don't use. Use "now".

at this point
  Don't use.

B

base directories
  Put the variable name for a directory in all capital letters regardless of the operating system. If the variable name has spaces, replace the spaces with the underscore ( _ ) character.

  For *nix, precede the base directory with a dollar sign ( $ ). For Windows, surround the base directory with percent signs ( % ).

  *nix
    $SPLUNK_HOME
  Windows
    %SPLUNK_HOME%

basic steps
  Don't use. Use "steps".

basically
  Don't use.

be sure to
  Don't use. Use "make sure".

below
  Don't use to refer to a location in a UI or document. Directional or visual instructions are unhelpful to visually impaired users. Use "lower" to refer to versions of software.

blacklist
  Don't use as a verb. Use as a noun or adjective when referring to a field, rule, or filter in the product. See also whitelist.
Correct
  Set up blacklist rules to filter specific incoming data.
Incorrect
  Blacklist the specific incoming data.

C

can not
  Don't use as two words. Use "can't" or "cannot".
can't
   It's okay to use simple contractions in the present tense. See Contractions.

can
   Use to mean ability.

cannot
   Use as one word when the emphasis is on "not". Otherwise, it's okay to use "can't". See Contractions.

case sensitive
   Don't include a hyphen when you write the term after the noun that it modifies.
   Correct
      the password is case sensitive
   Incorrect
      the password is case-sensitive

case-sensitive
   Include a hyphen when you write the term before the noun that it modifies.
   Correct
      a case-sensitive username
   Incorrect
      the password is case-sensitive

check box
   Use as two words. Write "check or uncheck a check box", or "select or deselect a check box".

check out
   Don't use. Use "see".

click
   Use as the action for a button or tab. Don't use "click on".
   Correct
      Click OK.
   Incorrect
      Click on the OK button.

choose
   Don't use when referring to UI selections. Use "select".

comma separated
   Don't include a hyphen when you write the term after the noun that it modifies.
   Correct
      the list is comma separated
   Incorrect
      the list is comma-sensitive

comma-separated
   Include a hyphen when you write the term before the noun that it modifies.
   Correct
      a comma-separated list
   Incorrect
      a comma separated list
command line
  Use as two words when used as a noun.

command-line
  Include a hyphen when used as an adjective.

completely
  Don't use.

could
  Don't use. Use "can". Avoid subjunctive mood. See Write in indicative or imperative mood.

D

DA
  Domain Add-on. Don't use DA when you write about the product. Use "add-on". It's okay to use "DA" in a file or path. See add-on.

data model
  Use as two words when referring to a knowledge object.

data point
  Use as two words.

datamodel
  Use as one word when used as a search command.

dataset
  Use as one word.

definitely
  Don't use.

demonstrate
  Don't use. Use "show" to mean illustrating or explaining with examples.

desire
  Don't use. Use "want" to show hope for or to express a need.
  Correct
    Edit the stanzas to collect the data you want to view.
  Incorrect
    Edit the stanzas to collect the data you desire.

dialog box
  Use as two words without "ue". Don't use "modal".
  Correct
    In the dialog box
  Incorrect
    In the dialog
    In the dialogue
    In the dialogue box
In the modal dialogue

Include "ue" when referring to the conversation between two or more people.

didn't

It's okay to use simple contractions in present tense. See Contractions.

directory

See file path.

don't

It's okay to use simple contractions in present tense. See Contractions.

double-check

Don't use. Use "check" or "make sure".

double-click

Include a hyphen.

do not

Use as two word when the emphasis is on "not". Otherwise, it's okay to use "don't". See Contractions.

drag-and-drop

Use as an adjective. For a verb use "drag", which implies drop.

drill down

Use as two words as a verb.

drilldown

Use as one word without a hyphen as a noun or an adjective.

drop-down

Use only when necessary for clarity. Don't use as a noun. Include "list" with the title of the list for context.

E

earlier

Don't use to refer to versions of software. Use "lower".

e.g.

Don't use. Spell out "for example". Don't use Latin abbreviations or terms.

enables you to

Don't use. Use "lets you" if you're writing about the product, otherwise make the content user-focused.

endpoint

Use as one word.

epoch time

Don't use. Use "UNIX time".
et al.
Don't use. Use "and others". Don't use Latin abbreviations or terms.

etc.
Don't use. Use "and so on". Don't use Latin abbreviations or terms.

execute
Don't use. Use "run".

F
FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)
Singular. Don't use "FAQs" as a plural.

fetch
Don't use. Use "retrieve".

field-value pair
Include a hyphen between "field" and "value" when they modify the word "pair".
Correct
   field-value pair
Incorrect
   field/value pair
   field value pair

file name
Use as two words.

file name extensions
The suffix appended to a specific file type. Put in lowercase letters.
Correct
   Update the stanza in indexes.conf.
   Upload the upload.json file.
   Enlarge the workflow.jpg image.
   Create a file named tar-exmpl-2018.tar for the directory.
   The manual downloads as alert_actions.pdf.
   Distribute the file that ends in .splunkconfig.
Incorrect
   Update the stanza in the conf file.
   Upload the Upload json file.
   Enlarge the workflow .jpg.
   Create a compressed .tgz archive file for the directory.
   The manual downloads as alert_actions.PDF.
   Send the fat_cats.GIF to the entire team.

file path
A unique location in a file system. For *nix, use the forward slash (/). For Windows, use the backslash (\).
*nix
   $SPLUNK_HOME/bin/splunkd
Windows
   %SPLUNK_HOME%\bin\splunkd.exe
Use angle brackets to indicate parts of a file path that differ by user or operating system, such as /home/<username>/.login. See Brackets.

file system
Use as two words.

file types
The term used for a file category, such as Portable Document Format (PDF) documents or Graphics Interchange Format (GIF) files. Use a file type when you write about a broad file category. It's okay to shorten the file type as an acronym. Capitalize the acronym when it's used as an adjective or when it stands alone in text.
Correct
The upload must be in JSON format.
Upload photos as JPG files.
Download the topic as a PDF.
Save the export as a CSV file.
The TAR file can have a .tar, .tar.gz, or .tgz extension.
Incorrect
The upload must be a .json.
Upload photos as jpegs.
Download the topic as a pdf.
Save the export as a .CSV.
The TAR file can have a TAR, .tar.GZ, or .TGZ extension.

filename
Don't use. Use "file name".

filepath
Don't use. Use "file path".

for instance
Don't use. Use "for example".

H
have been
Don't use. Use "are".

have knowledge of
Don't use. Use "know".

have plans
Don't use. Use "plan".

have the option to
Don't use. Use "can".

higher
Use to refer to versions of software. Don't use "later".

home page
Use as two words.
host name
Use as two words.

homepage
Don't use. Use "home page".

hostname
Don't use. Use "host name".

hover over
Use to describe the action of positioning the pointer over a UI item. Include the preposition "over".

I

i.e.
Don't use. Spell out "in other words". Don't use Latin abbreviations or terms.

if you want to
Don't use in a task step. Use "(Optional)".

important
Don't use as a note tag. See Best practices for using callout boxes.

install
Use as a verb.

installation
Use as a noun.

instance
Use to refer to a Splunk Enterprise instance. Use the full phrase "Splunk Enterprise instance" on the first use in the topic or section. See machine and server.

internet
Lowercase, unless it is the first word in a sentence or part of a proper noun, such as Internet Explorer. Always use with a definite article, such as "the internet".

into
Use as one word in the context of getting data into a Splunk product. Example: Get data into Splunk User Behavior Analytics.

is able to
Don't use. Use "can".

isn't
It's okay to use simple contractions in present tense. See Contractions.

it is recommended that...
Don't use. Rewrite to make a statement about what the customer must do.
J

just

Don't use.

K

key

Don't use as an adjective.

Correct

This diagram shows important components and interactions in a cluster.

Incorrect

This diagram shows the key cluster-related components and interactions.

key-value pair

Include a hyphen. Don't use a slash or space. Don't use the phrase "key value" on its own.

Correct

key-value pair

Incorrect

key value

key/value pair

keyboard characters

The core section of keys on a keyboard. Special keyboard characters, such as @, |, and / , aren't standardized on international keyboards. Be explicit when referring to special keyboard characters. See Special characters.

L

later

Don't use to refer to versions of software. Use "higher".

latest

Use to refer to the latest versions of browsers and SaaS.

launch

Don't use. Use "open" to mean starting an operation or to set in motion. It's okay to use "launch" to match the UI.

Correct

Uncheck the Launch browser with Splunk check box to prevent your browser from opening.

Incorrect

Start Splunk Enterprise and launch Splunk Web.
Place a shortcut on your desktop to launch Splunk Enterprise.

left

Don't use to refer to a location in a UI or document. Directional or visual instructions are unhelpful to visually impaired users.

line break

A long line of code that ends on one line and continues on another line due to space limitations on an electronic or paper page. Use as two words without a hyphen. Don't refer to a forced line break as a "carriage return".

Linux
Use "Linux" if only Linux is supported. Write "*nix" when referring to both Linux and UNIX together.

**log in**
Use as two words as a verb. Follow with "to" to describe entering a username or password for a system. Use "as" to describe entering with a specific role or privileges. Don't use "log on".
Correct
Log in to Splunk Web.
Log in as an administrator.
Incorrect
Log on to Splunk Web.
Log on as an administrator.

**log off**
Don't use. Use "log out".

**log on**
Don't use. Use "log in".

**log out**
Use as a verb. Don't use "log off".

**login**
Use as one word as a noun or adjective. Don't use "logon".
Correct
The login interface is easy to use.
Incorrect
The logon password is "changeme".

**logoff**
Don't use. Use "log out".

**logon**
Don't use. Use "log in".

**logout**
Don't use as one word. Use "log out".

**long press**
Use to refer to the gesture used to press and hold a control on a touch-based user interface.

**look up**
Use as two words as a verb.
Correct
Set the CSV lookup to look up the host.
Incorrect
Set the CSV lookup to lookup the host.

**lookup**
Use as one word as a noun or adjective.

**lower**
Use to refer to versions of software. Don't use "earlier".
**M**

machine
Use to refer to the virtual or physical machine that the instance runs on. See instance and server.

master
The master node of an indexer cluster. If the context isn’t clear, use “master node” or “master node of an indexer cluster”.

may
Use to mean permission.

might
Use to mean possibility.

modal
Don’t use. Use “dialog box”.

mouse over
Don’t use. Use “hover over”.

multi
Don’t include a hyphen.
Correct
multiserver
multisite
multivalue
Incorrect
multi-server
multi-site
multi-value

multivalued field
Don’t use. Use “multivalue field”. See multivalue field in the Splexicon.

**N**

non
Don’t include a hyphen.
Correct
nonzero

note that
Don’t use in text. Consider whether using a note callout box is more effective.

null
Write in lowercase letters to refer to an empty value, the null Search Processing Language (SPL) command, or when null appears in SPL search results.
on-premises

Include a hyphen and treat "premises" as plural. Don't use "on premise", "on-premise", "on prem", or "on-prem".
Correct
If your Splunk platform deployment is installed on-premises, you can...
A deployment that uses an on-premises search head...
For on-premises Splunk Enterprise instances only.
Incorrect
A deployment that uses an on-premise search head...
On-the-premises in a server room
Running Splunk Enterprise on-prem

once

Use when you mean one time and no more. Don't use to mean "after" or "when".

only

Place before or after the word or phrase it modifies.

out-of-the-box

Don't use. Use "default".

path name

Don't use. Use "path".

pathname

Don't use. Use "path".

per

Include a hyphen.
Correct
Per-panel
Per-result triggering
Incorrect
Per panel
Per result triggering

percent

Use a numeral followed by the percent sign ( % ) to specify an exact percentage. Don't use the word "percent".
Correct
10%
Incorrect
Ten percent
10 percent

percentage

Use as a noun when not specifying an exact quantity.

perform
Don't use in the context of searches or other commands. Use "run".

pinch
Use to refer to the two-finger gesture used to zoom out on a touch-based user interface.

please
Don't use.

plug in
Write as two words without a hyphen when you use this term as a verb.

plugin
Write as one word without a hyphen when you use this term as a noun or adjective.

plug-in
Don't use.

PM
Write with capital letters and without periods. Use to mean between noon and 11:59 in the evening when writing the time of day. See 12-hour clock.

point to
Don't use. Use "hover over".

preconfigured
Don't use. Use "configured".

Q

quite
Don't use.

R

radio button
The name of the button. Don't use "radio" without following it with a noun.

reach a decision
Don't use. Use "decide".

read/write, read/write/delete
Use the forward slash instead of a hyphen when you write about read, write, and delete permissions.
Correct
Add read/write permissions for all users.
The role restricts read/write/delete permissions.
Incorrect
Add read-write permissions for all users.
Add read and/or write permissions for all users.

real time
Use as two words when used as a noun.
real-time
   Include a hyphen when used as an adjective.

realtime
   Don't use.

really
   Don't use.

reboot
   Don't use. Use "restart". It's okay to use "reboot" when it appears in a command.

recommend
   Don't use. Rewrite to make a statement about what the customer must do.

reenable
   Don't include a hyphen. Or rewrite as "enable again".

reenter
   Don't include a hyphen. Or rewrite as "enter again".

refer to
   Don't use. Use "see".

referred to as
   Don't use. Use "called".

regex
   Write out "regular expression". Don't use any other variation or abbreviation.

remember
   Don't use.

rerun
   Don't use. Use "run the search again". Use "again" only if it is necessary for clarity.

right
   Don't use to refer to a location in a UI or document. Directional or visual instructions are unhelpful to visually impaired users.

right-click
   Include a hyphen.

run
   Use in the context of searches or other commands. Don't use "execute" or "perform".
   Correct
      Run the search.
   Incorrect
      Execute the search.
      Perform the search.

run time
Don't use.

run-time
  Don't use.

runtime
  Use as one word as a noun or adjective.

S
  (s), (es)
  Don't write a lowercase "s" or "es" in parentheses after a noun to indicate both singular and plural. Choose the best option for your sentence. In most cases, using the plural works best for understanding.

SA
  Supporting Add-on. Don't use "SA" when you write about the product. Use "add-on". It's okay to use "SA" in a file or path. See add-on.

search
  A search that a user launches manually is called an "ad hoc search". A search that runs programmatically or on a schedule is called a "scheduled search".

see
  Use for references and cross-references. Don't use "refer to", "consult", "read", or "check out".
  Example
    For an introduction to forwarders, see About forwarding and receiving.

select
  Use to highlight text, choose menu items, or check a check box.

server
  In the Splunk platform context, the term "server" refers to an instance of the Splunk platform. Because the term "server" is used in the IT industry to refer both to a type of software and the machine that such software runs on, avoid this term. Be clear when you refer to the Splunk platform, and use one of the following terms:
    instance
      to refer to a Splunk platform instance
    machine
      to refer to the virtual or physical machine that the instance runs on
  See instance and machine.

should
  Don't use. Avoid subjunctive mood. See Write in indicative or imperative mood.

shows up
  Don't use. Use "appears".

sign in
  Don't use. See log in.

sign on
  Don't use. See log in.
simply
Don't use.

source type, sourcetype
Use as one word when referring to the field name. Use as two words in all other instances.

space-separated
Include a hyphen when you write the term before the noun that it modifies.
Correct
A space-separated list
Incorrect
A space separated list

specify
Don't use in steps. Use "select", "click", "type", "enter", or whatever the action is.

specifically
Don't use.

spin up, spin down
Don't use. Use "start" and "stop" or the most descriptive action for the virtual machine.

Splunk
When used alone, use "Splunk" to refer only to the company, not to any product. Don't use in the possessive form.
Correct
Splunk has a mascot called Buttercup.
a Splunk customer
Splunk.com account
Configure Splunk software
Incorrect
a Splunk account
Configure your Splunk.
Restart Splunk.

Splunk Developer Portal
Use as a proper noun to refer to https://dev.splunk.com, spelled with initial capital letters and using a definite article. Don't use abbreviations or acronyms in place of this term. Don't confuse with the Splunk Developer Program.
Correct
See the Splunk Developer Portal.
Incorrect
See Splunk Developer Portal.
See the Splunk dev portal.
See SDP.

Splunk Developer Program
Don't use in documentation. This term refers to the program containing developer offerings like services, tooling, and the Splunk Developer Portal. Don't confuse with the Splunk Developer Portal itself, which refers to https://dev.splunk.com.

Splunk Enterprise
Use to refer to the software. You can use "Splunk Enterprise" in documentation when you discuss the software. Don't include a definite article.
Correct
Splunk Enterprise
Incorrect
The Splunk Enterprise
Splunk Enterprise platform

the Splunk platform
Use to refer to any combination of Splunk Enterprise and Splunk Cloud. Include a definite article in most cases. Use as a modifier when writing about an instance, a deployment, or an environment when you’re being inclusive of more than one of these platform products.
Correct
the Splunk platform
a Splunk platform instance
your Splunk platform deployment
version 7.2.4 of the Splunk platform
Incorrect
Splunk Platform
Splunk server instance
a Splunk instance

Splunk software
Use to refer to any combination of Splunk Enterprise and Splunk Cloud, any Splunk-supported apps and add-ons, or any other software produced by Splunk.
Correct
Splunk software
Incorrect
Splunk Software
Splunk Software instance

Splunk Support Portal
Use to refer to the portal where customers with a support contract can get assistance from Splunk Customer Support. Capitalize the initial letters.

Splunk Web
Use to refer to the graphical user interface for the Splunk platform.
Correct
Splunk Web
Incorrect
SplunkWeb
Splunk UI
Splunk Web UI
Web UI
Web Interface

splunkd
Use when referring specifically to the Splunk Enterprise process, the service that is installed with Splunk Enterprise on Windows machines, or a service used to manage the splunkd process on Linux machines. Don't use in place of Splunk Enterprise or the Splunk platform.
Correct
Splunk Enterprise installs a process called splunkd on your host.
Configure `systemd` to manage `splunkd` as a service.

Incorrect
After installing the add-on, restart `splunkd`.

spread
Use to refer to the two-finger gesture used to zoom in on a touch-based user interface.

switch or switch component
A clickable slider bar in the UI that switches back and forth between on and off states. It's okay to say "switch", "switch component", or "toggle switch". Don't call a switch a "toggle."

symbol
See keyboard character.

T
takes you to
Don't use. Use "open".

TA
Technology Add-on. Don't use "TA" when you write about the product. Use "add-on". It is okay to use "TA" in a file or path. See add-on.

tap
Use to refer to the gesture used to press or select a control or link on a touch-based user interface.

tarball
Don't use. Use "TAR file".

The purpose of this document is...
Don't use. Rewrite to be user-focused.

This document describes...
Don't use. Rewrite to be user-focused.

This topic describes...
Don't use. Rewrite to be user-focused.

thus
Don't use.

time series
Use as two words when used as a noun.

time-series
Include a hyphen when used as an adjective.

timeseries
Don't use. Use "time series" as a noun or "time-series" as an adjective.

toggle
Use as a verb to click a switch component back and forth between on and off states. Don't call a switch component a "toggle."

toggle switch
A clickable slider bar in the UI that switches back and forth between on and off states. It's okay to say "switch", "switch component", or "toggle switch". Don't call a toggle switch a "toggle."

totally
Don't use.

U
UNIX
Use "UNIX" if only UNIX is supported. Write "*nix" when referring to both UNIX and Linux together.

UNIX time
Use instead of "epoch time".

username
Use as one word in written text. If "user name" appears as two words in the UI, write "user name" as two words in the documentation to match.

utilize
Don't use. Use "use".

V

v
Spell out "version" instead of abbreviating with a "v".
Correct
Splunk platform versions 6.6.x and 7.0.x

very
Don't use.

vetted
Don't use. Use "approved".

via
Don't use. Use "by using" or "through". Don't use Latin abbreviations or terms.

vice versa
Don't use. Use "and the reverse". Don't use Latin abbreviations or terms.

view
Use when describing the UI. Don't use "see".
Correct
This charts lets you view the percentage of crashes.
View app usage.

visit
Don't use in the context of Internet sites. Use “go to”, “navigate to”, or another phrase.

vs.

Don't use. Spell out "versus". Don't use Latin abbreviations or terms.

W

warning
Don’t use as a note type. A warning indicates danger or bodily harm and appears in hardware documentation.

web
Lowercase unless it is part of a proper name, like Splunk Web or World Wide Web.

whether or not
Don't use. Use “whether”.

whitelist
Don't use as a verb. Use as a noun or adjective when referring to a field, rule, or filter in the product. See also blacklist.
Correct
Set up whitelist rules to filter specific incoming data.
Incorrect
Whitelist the specific incoming data.

wish
Don't use. Use "want".

won't
Don't use. Avoid contractions in the future tense. See Contractions.

would
Don't use. Avoid subjunctive mood. See Write in indicative or imperative mood.

X

x (version number in releases)
Use a lowercase "x" at the relevant place in the version name when referring to maintenance builds, minor versions, or releases for a product. Don't include a “v” for version before the number.
Correct
Splunk Enterprise 7.x
Splunk platform versions 6.6.x and 7.0.x
Incorrect
Splunk platform v5.0.x
Splunk platform version 7.1.X
Voice and tone

Tone

The way you speak and the way you write is likely very different. The way you talk is probably verbose and colloquial whether you intend it to be or not. Traditional technical writing tends to be dry and formal. Splunk documentation finds a balance between the two: Splunk docs are casual and approachable, yet succinct and direct.

When you create written content, shape your docs around your reader’s needs and expectations, and write to them as though they are a professional acquaintance. Aim to be confident, friendly, and comprehensive, and not insensitive, saccharine, or complicated.

Here are a few guidelines you can follow to achieve a balanced tone in your writing:

- Stay away from jargon or idioms. See Use plain language.
- Write in active voice and present tense whenever possible. See Be active and present.
- Use contractions, such as isn’t, don’t, and can’t. See Contractions.
- Write precisely and concretely.
- Avoid qualitative language, such as calling things easy or simple. What’s easy for one user might be challenging for another.

Tone examples

The following table shows examples of tone that are too formal, too casual, and just right:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Too formal</th>
<th>Too casual</th>
<th>Just right</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Note that Splunk Enterprise Security automatically enables SSL; therefore, confirm that the protocol in your web browser is &quot;https&quot; (for example: <a href="https://splunkserver:8000">https://splunkserver:8000</a>).</td>
<td>ES enables SSL, so you might want to make sure that your web browser is using HTTPS, like in <a href="https://splunkserv">https://splunkserv</a> e:8000.</td>
<td>Splunk Enterprise Security enables SSL. Check that the web browser protocol uses HTTPS. For example, <a href="https://splunkserver:8000">https://splunkserver:8000</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please click on the Complete button to complete the process and display the result.</td>
<td>When you click Complete and you see the result, you know you are done. Way to go!</td>
<td>Click Complete.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The information about the KV store status can be retrieved from the kvstore/status endpoint via the GET method.</td>
<td>Do a GET on the kvstore/status endpoint.</td>
<td>Submit a GET request to the kvstore/status endpoint to access KV store status information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forwarder management is a graphical user interface (GUI) that is built on top of the deployment server and offers a streamlined solution to configure the deployment server and monitor the status of deployment updates.</td>
<td>The forwarder management GUI lives on top of the deployment server. The GUI makes it easy to configure your server while monitoring any updates that might come up.</td>
<td>You can configure the deployment server and monitor the status of deployment updates with the forwarder management graphical interface.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metrics can be used for the investigation, monitoring, and troubleshooting of your pipeline in real time.</td>
<td>You can use metrics to do some really cool things like look into, keep an eye on, and tweak your pipeline as the data is coming in.</td>
<td>Use metrics to investigate, monitor, and troubleshoot your pipeline in real time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A gauge is a metric that is composed of a single numerical value that can arbitrarily increase or decrease depending upon the value of which the metric is tracking.</td>
<td>A gauge is a number that can go up and down for a couple of reasons, like if it gets hotter or colder in a server room.</td>
<td>A gauge represents a single numerical value that changes based on what you’re tracking.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Use plain language

Using plain language helps the widest variety of users understand what you write. Remember that Splunk documentation readers are a global audience whose first language might not be English. Plain language makes translation easier and makes documentation more accessible. Using plain language increases the chance that readers understand what you wrote the first time they read it.

For more guidance on how using plain language increases accessibility, see Write docs for everyone.

Consider the following tips for using plain language in your writing:

- Avoid obscure words.
- Use simple sentences. Often, you can communicate the same message in 50 words instead of 100 words.
- Avoid abbreviations. For more information on abbreviations, see Abbreviations.
- Be consistent. Use the same term to mean the same thing in one topic as you do in another topic.

Avoid jargon and complex terminology

Jargon and complex terminology are terms that are specific to a company, profession, or field. These terms are often referred to as technical language and can confuse and frustrate readers, so avoid them whenever possible. If you have to use complex or unfamiliar Splunk-specific terminology, link to the term in the Splexicon instead of redefining the term. For more information on linking to the Splexicon, see Links for Splexicon entries and download files.

See the table for examples of how to translate jargon into plain language:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jargon</th>
<th>Plain language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do a GET.</td>
<td>Submit a GET request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the out-of-the-box settings.</td>
<td>Use the default settings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You can deploy Splunk Enterprise on-prem.</td>
<td>You can deploy Splunk Enterprise on-premises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perform an execution of the process steps with a core focus of ensuring that the deployments don't conflict.</td>
<td>Make sure that no deployments conflict with one another.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consider the following tips to help you avoid jargon in your writing:

- Take into account your audience's level of knowledge.
- Consider if the user needs to know the term to understand the documentation.
- Refer to the Usage dictionary for examples of words and phrases that are unnecessarily complex and their alternatives. See the Usage dictionary.

Be active and present

Strive for active voice and present tense in your documentation. Writing in active voice allows readers to place themselves as the subject in the documentation, and present tense tells readers what they can expect as they work through the topics.

While there are times using passive voice and future tense is appropriate, always keep your audience in mind and center your writing around the user as much as possible.
Active voice

Active voice makes content clear by indicating who or what performs the action, even when the subject is implied. Minimize the use of passive voice in your writing.

Correct
Click **Print** to print the document.
The forwarder sends data to the receiver.

Incorrect
When the **Print** button is clicked, the document is printed.
Data is sent to the receiver.

Present tense

Present tense allows readers to experience the documentation while they read it. Minimize the use of past tense or future tense in your writing.

Correct
The summary statistics continue to calculate whitelisted items, but the items don't appear in the dashboard.
All apps are processed through the tool before they are published to Splunkbase.

Incorrect
The summary statistics will continue to calculate whitelisted items, but they will not be displayed in the dashboard.
All apps will now be processed through the tool before being published to Splunkbase.

Write in indicative or imperative mood

The form that a verb takes tells a reader how to regard the sentence, known as mood. Three major moods appear in standard English writing: indicative, imperative, and subjunctive.

Use indicative or imperative mood

The indicative mood states facts. The imperative mood expresses commands or requests. Use these two moods when writing Splunk docs.

Correct
You can send data to the indexer by using a forwarder.
Send data to the indexer by using a forwarder.
The forwarder sends data to the indexer.

Avoid subjunctive mood

The subjunctive mood expresses doubt and causes confusion over whether you're making a recommendation or stating a requirement. Splunk software either does or doesn't do something, so write clearly and avoid the following subjunctive mood verbs:
Avoid anthropomorphisms

Anthropomorphism is attributing human characteristics to inanimate objects. Computers don't think, want, worry, or do other things that are uniquely human. Avoid anthropomorphisms in your writing.

Correct
The forwarder sends data to the location that you set in the configuration file.
Processing components process the data.

Incorrect
The configuration file tells the forwarder where to send the data.
Processing components handle the data.
Grammar and word choice

Abbreviations

Don't use common abbreviations, such as a.k.a., e.g., etc., and i.e., in documentation and UI text. Instead, use precise language and state what you mean. See the Usage dictionary for terms to use instead of abbreviations.

Write abbreviations for keyboard shortcuts using initial capitalization, plus (+) signs, no spaces, and no periods.

Correct
    Ctrl+Alt+Del
Incorrect
    Ctrl - alt - del
    Ctrl + Alt + Del

It's okay to abbreviate a unit of measurement in text. See Measurements.

Acronyms

Always spell out a full term at first use on every page before you refer to it as an acronym or initialism. Use your best judgment for commonly accepted abbreviations, such as REST and API.

Add the acronym or initialism in parentheses after the full name.

Correct
    Use the Splunk Search Processing Language (SPL) to search your data.
Incorrect
    Use SPL (the Splunk Search Processing Language) to search your data.

Capitalize all letters in an acronym or initialism, including specific file name extensions and file types that are used as adjectives. See “File name extensions” and “File types” in the Usage dictionary.

Don't use periods with acronyms or initialisms when they stand alone in text.

Correct
    CSV file
    HTTP protocol
    JSON file
    Upload the docs.pdf attachment.
Incorrect
    c.s.v. file
    http protocol
    json file
    Upload the docs.PDF attachment.

Don't use an acronym if it doesn't closely match the words it refers to.

Avoid
When using a tool like Volume Shadow Copy Services (VSS)...

See Measurements for abbreviating rates of measurement.

See Dates and Time for date and time abbreviations.

**Contractions**

Because Splunk documentation is informal in tone, you can use contractions in the present tense, such as "isn't", "don't", and "can't".

Don't use contractions for the past tense, such as "didn't".

If you can't rewrite a future-tense sentence into present tense, it's okay to use contractions, such as "won't". For more details about tenses, see Be active and present.

Avoid using contractions formed from nouns and verbs to show possession, such as "search's". For more information, see Possessives.

**Example names and domains**

If you need to create a fictitious name, email address, domain name, phone number, or IP address in your docs, create an example that adheres to the following guidance.

**Names**

If you need a fictitious name for an example in your docs, use a name that's sensitive to culture, religious affiliation, holidays, traditions, politics, and business. Make sure that the name you create reflects the wide range of names used around the world.

Don't use a fictional character that's currently in copyright, your own name, or the name of friends or family members as an example name.

See the following examples of names that meet this guidance:

- Alex Martin
- Claudia Garcia
- David Mayer
- Maria Dubois
- Rutherford Sullivan
- Vanya Patel
- Wei Zhang

**Email addresses**

If you need a fictitious email address for an example in your docs, use a name at follows the guidance in the Names
section. Never use your own name, or the name of friends or family members, in an example email address.

Use Buttercup Games, a fictitious online store created by Splunk, as the email domain.

See the following examples:

- info@buttercupgames.com
- alex@buttercupgames.com
- buttercup@buttercupgames.com
- claudia@buttercupgames.com
- david@buttercupgames.com
- maria@buttercupgames.com
- rutherford@buttercupgames.com
- vanya@buttercupgames.com
- wei@buttercupgames.com

In cases where it doesn't make sense to use Buttercup Games as the email domain, use the @example.com suffix.

**Domain names**

If you need a fictitious domain name for an example in your docs, use http://www.example.splunk.com.

In cases where it doesn't make sense to use Splunk in the URL, use http://www.example.com. The Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) set aside this domain specifically for documentation needs.

**Phone numbers**

If you need a fictitious phone number for an example in your docs, use a North American phone number in the range +1-800-555-0000 through +1-800-555-9999. The North America Numbering Plan set aside this range of phone numbers to use in examples and in fiction.

Never use a real phone number as a phone number example.

**IP addresses**

If you need a fictitious IP address for an example in your docs, use one of the IP addresses in the following ranges:

- 192.0.2.0 to 192.0.2.255
- 198.51.100.0 to 198.51.100.255
- 203.0.113.0 to 203.0.113.255

The Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) set aside this block of addresses specifically for documentation needs.

**Plurals in parentheses**

Don't write a lowercase s or es in parentheses, "(s)" or "(es)", after a noun to indicate both singular and plural. Choose the best option for your documentation. In most cases, using the plural works best for understanding the sentence.

If it's important to include both singular and plural, try including the phrase "one or more".
Correct
The endpoint returns the current webhook key.
The endpoint returns the current webhook keys.
The endpoint returns one or more of the current webhook keys.
The endpoint returns all of the current webhook keys.
Incorrect
The endpoint returns the current webhook key(s).

For acceptable uses of parentheses in your writing, see Parentheses.

Possessives

Don't use an apostrophe to make product names, company names, or trademarked terms possessive.

Correct
The dashboard shows data pulled from the Splunk Enterprise internal log files.
Submit a case using the Splunk Support Portal.
The Search function has robust capabilities.
Incorrect
The dashboard shows data pulled from Splunk Enterprise's internal log files.
Submit a case using Splunk's Support portal.
Search's capabilities are robust.

For acceptable uses of apostrophes, see Apostrophe.

Pronouns

Pronouns replace nouns. When you use pronouns in your writing, make sure that the pronoun correctly refers to the noun it replaces, known as its antecedent.

Gender-neutral pronouns

Write for inclusivity and don't make assumptions about sex or gender. When you write Splunk documentation, avoid using gender-specific and sexist language.

Most of the topics in Splunk documentation use the second-person singular pronoun, "you" and "your", to address a single user directly. If you have to write in the third person or refer to someone in the third person, make sure that you choose gender-neutral third-person pronouns, such as "they", "their", and "them".

In Splunk documentation, it's acceptable to use a plural pronoun with a singular antecedent when you refer to people. Use third-person-plural pronouns when you refer to a person of unspecified gender. Don't write "him or her" or "his or hers".

Correct
The end user must add lines of code to their app to enable it in Splunk Enterprise.

In most cases, you can make the antecedent plural to keep agreement with the pronoun.

Correct
End users must add lines of code to their app to enable it in Splunk Enterprise.
In many cases, and preferably, you can rewrite the sentence to be more direct.

Correct and better
You must add code to your app to enable it in Splunk Enterprise.

The following examples are not acceptable uses of pronouns in Splunk documentation:

Noninclusive
- The end user must add lines of code to his or her app to enable it in Splunk Enterprise.

Sexist
- The end user must add lines of code to her app to enable it in Splunk Enterprise.

Sexist
- The end user must add lines of code to his app to enable it in Splunk Enterprise.

If you refer to an actual person, find out what pronoun they prefer and use that pronoun when you write about them.

**Personal pronouns**

Use the second-person pronoun, "you", in Splunk documentation. Avoid first-person pronouns, such as "I", "our", "us", and "we", unless you are responding to customer feedback or are writing a tutorial.

**Relative pronouns**

"That" and "which" don't mean the same thing, so don't use them interchangeably.

In a sentence, "that" introduces an essential clause. If you remove the words after "that", the sentence doesn't make sense.

Correct
- For HDFS working directory, provide the path in HDFS that you want Hunk to use as a working directory.

"Which" introduces a nonessential clause. If you remove the words after "which", the sentence still makes sense, although it is less detailed.

Correct
- Splunk Enterprise changes one of the default port settings in the server.conf file, which is one of the stanzas you copied but didn't edit.

When referring to a person, use "who" instead of "that".

**Vague pronouns**

Avoid ambiguous references between a pronoun and its antecedent. Vague pronouns include "this", "that", "which", and "it". To add clarity, replace the vague pronoun with a noun.

Correct
- Set the enableReduction value to true.

Incorrect
- Set it to true.
Standard English spelling and phrases

Write in standard English. The dictionary of choice for Splunk documentation is *Merriam-Webster*, so consult the dictionary if you question your spelling.

Avoid Latin and British abbreviations, spelling, and phrases, such as e.g., colour, and full stop, in your documentation. See the Usage dictionary for acceptable terms to use instead.
Accessibility

Write docs for everyone

Always aim to write content that all users can access and understand, regardless of background or level of ability. Though most of these guidelines aren't new to this style guide, they make content accessible for all audiences, with or without disabilities.

Keep the following guidelines in mind when writing docs for everyone.

Writing

Write using plain language, simple sentence construction, and short paragraphs. Complex sentences and long paragraphs can be daunting for some users, such as those with reading disabilities, low vision, or non-native English proficiency. Plain language offers a smoother reading experience for all users. For example, users with screen readers can process text more quickly when sentences are concise and direct.

Avoid using complex words, such as jargon or complicated terminology. When you need to use terminology, use it consistently. For more guidance, see Use plain language.

Avoid directional or visual language

Directional language doesn't help users with screen readers. Instead of using "above", "below", "left", or "right" to direct users, use "earlier", "later", or "following". Likewise, avoid relying only on visual language, such as text referring to color, shape, and patterns. Refer to UI elements using their labels whenever possible, and don't rely on directional or visual language as the only means to guide users to a location.

Lead into new page elements

Page elements include tables, lists, images, videos, searches, commands, and code blocks. Always introduce a new page element using a lead-in sentence that explains what information the element contains or what the user needs to do. A lead-in sentence prepares users with what to expect from the upcoming page element.

Spell it out

Avoid unnecessary abbreviations or acronyms, especially those that don't closely match the words they refer to. Spell out words like "and", "plus", "minus", and "about" instead of using their respective symbols. For more guidance, see Abbreviations and Acronyms. See the Usage dictionary for an index of terms that we use or avoid in Splunk docs.

Be precise

When using pronouns that point back to or substitute for a noun, consider whether the noun that the pronoun refers to is clear. If the referent is unclear, too broad, or located far from the pronoun, the sentence can be vague or difficult to parse for users with reading disabilities.

Avoid capturing vague or broad ideas using pronouns like "this" or "these" without additional clarification. Make sure that relative pronouns, like "who", "which", and "that", modify the nearest noun. If a pronoun can have multiple possible referents in a sentence, always specify that referent in your writing. See Pronouns for more information.
The following table contains examples of vague sentences and more precise alternatives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vague</th>
<th>Precise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This eventually leads to the job expiring.</td>
<td>The job eventually expires after the search object is removed from the queue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is similar to the algorithms used for online shopping websites, which suggest related items based on what items other customers viewed or purchased.</td>
<td>This algorithm functions like an online shopping algorithm, which suggests related items based on what items other customers viewed or purchased.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Headings**

Use headings to break up long paragraphs and help screen reader users navigate through the topic. Descriptive titles and headings are crucial to helping all users find the information they need.

For example, many screen reader users tab through headings first to figure out where they need to go. Users with reading disabilities find sections organized by headings easier to parse than long sections with fewer headings. The more descriptive and organized your headings are, the easier it is for users to orient themselves and navigate through your documentation.

Organize your topic using headers down to the H3 level. If you need to use a heading level beyond an H3, your topic might be too complex. Never skip heading hierarchy levels. For more guidance on headings, see Manual names, topic titles, and section headings.

**Images**

Images can help sighted readers understand complex workflows, refer to an icon, or view a portion of the UI, but they must include surrounding text to assist users with limited vision. If possible, replace images with text instead. When you create an image, check that the image reinforces the understanding of the surrounding text and includes alt text.

Users who need alt text are often visually impaired and use screen readers. Users who are neurodivergent have varying abilities to understand different types of images and might use screen readers to assist their understanding. Some users don't speak English natively and can use translation tools to translate alt text for images that include English labels. All of these users rely on text that accurately and thoroughly describes every image in our documentation.

Follow this guidance when using images in your documentation:

- Don't include new information in an image. Introduce new information in the surrounding text of the image.
- Don't rely on color to convey the message of the image. Use a combination of colors, shapes, patterns, explanatory text, and labels instead.
- Ensure your image meets the contrast ratio for users with visual disabilities. See https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/ on the WebAIM website.
- Always include alt text. For guidance on writing alt text, see Include alt text.
- Lead into an image with a description of the content and the purpose of the image that makes the image meaningful.

For more guidance on using images, see Best practices for including images.

**Videos**

Always include captions and transcripts with videos. Synchronize captions with the video and include all dialogue and important sound effects. If your video covers important visual details, make sure to describe them in your voice over.
Tables

Keep tables as simple as possible. Complicated tables that contain lists or merged cells are difficult to navigate using a screen reader. If you need to leave a table cell blank, add a non-breaking space to the cell instead of leaving it empty. For more guidance on using tables, see Best practices for including tables.

Lists

Keep lists and sublists simple. Ensure that each item in the list uses parallel construction. Don't include more than one item, idea, or action in a single list item. Long, complicated lists that don't follow a consistent pattern hamper users with screen readers and can confuse those with reading disabilities. For more guidance on using lists, see Best practices for writing with lists.

Linking

Always make sure the purpose of the link is as clear, descriptive, and meaningful as possible. When you lead into the link with a description, users can decide whether that link is useful to them.

Example

If you run premium Splunk apps, see the Splunk Products version compatibility matrix to determine the versions that your apps support.

For more guidance on linking, see Best practices for including links.

Include alt text

Some Splunk customers use screen reader software, or screen readers, to read our documentation. Screen readers convert the contents on a page into synthesized speech for a user to listen to. All images in Splunk docs must have alt text so the entire page is accessible through screen reader software. Alt text is a written-out equivalent of the image that a screen reader can dictate.

You can find more information about website accessibility requirements on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) website and on the Section 508 government website. For more information on accessibility in Splunk docs, see Write docs for everyone.

Best practices

All images in Splunk docs, whether a screenshot, diagram, GIF, or inline image, must have alt text. For inline images, GIFs, and complex diagrams, it's important to have adequate surrounding text so you don't place too much information in the alt text.

Surrounding text

When you're writing surrounding text, keep the following points in mind:

- For an inline image, write the name or a description of the icon in the sentence. Put the icon in parentheses immediately after that text.
- For a complex diagram, use lines of surrounding text to explain the diagram. You can include a simple sentence in the alt text that refers to this descriptive text.
• It's okay to use "before", "after", and "following" in the surrounding text when you reference an image. Do not rely on directional language, such as "left", "right", "above", or "below", when you refer to a location in a UI or document. These instructions are unhelpful to visually impaired users.
• Lead into the image with a complete sentence. Punctuate the end of the sentence with a colon.

Alt text

When you're writing alt text for an image, keep the following points in mind:

• Describe the meaning of the image rather than what you see.
  ♦ Introduce only relevant information.
  ♦ Don't call out implications or add new information to the alt text.
• For complex images, place the most important information about the image in the first sentence of alt text.
  ♦ If the surrounding text describes the image, add a second sentence of alt text that describes where the surrounding text is on that page.
  ♦ If the surrounding text doesn't describe the image, you can use multiple sentences of alt text to describe the image.

Alt text examples

Good alt text describes an image so that a user who uses screen reader software can visualize the image as easily as a user who looks at the image.

The following images show examples of good alt text.

Screenshot of full-width UI

This example shows a screenshot of the full width of the UI:

Screenshot with user input

This example shows a screenshot with user input:
**Diagram with brief alt text**

This example shows a simple diagram with brief alt text:

![Diagram with brief alt text](image)

**Diagram described by surrounding text**

This example shows a diagram that is described in the surrounding text within the topic:

**Example**

In a typical distributed search process, there are two search processing phases: a map phase and a reduce phase. The map phase takes place across the indexers in your deployment. In the map phase, the indexers locate event data that matches the search query and sorts it into field-value pairs. When the map phase is complete, indexers send the results to the search head for the reduce phase. During the reduce phase, the search heads process the results through the commands in your search and aggregate them to produce a final result set.

The following diagram illustrates the standard two-phase distributed search process.
**GIF**

This example shows a GIF that has a detailed description of what happens during the animation:

![Flow Models GUI](image)

**Named inline image**

This example shows a named icon that users must click as part of a step in a task:

Click the embedded file icon (.attachment) in the editor toolbar to insert the markup.

**Unnamed inline image**

This example shows an unnamed icon that users must click as part of a step in a task:

Click the gear icon (⚙️).
Capitalization

Follow the capitalization guidelines in *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Some guidelines are specific to Splunk documentation:

- See the Splexicon for the correct capitalization of Splunk terms.
- Don't use capitalization for emphasis.

The types of capitalization styles referenced are as follows:

**Headline style**
Capitalize the first and last words, nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and subordinating conjunctions (if, because, as, that, and so on). Don't capitalize articles (a, an, the), coordinating conjunctions (and, but, or, nor), the "to" in an infinitive, and prepositions (with, to, for, in, from).

For hyphenated words, capitalize the first element and the subsequent elements unless they are articles, prepositions, and coordinating conjunctions. The following are examples:

- Cross-Selling Opportunities
- The Command-Line Interface

Use headline-style capitalization for names, titles, and headings.

**Sentence style**
Capitalize the first word and all proper nouns, such as product names or proper feature names. Use sentence-style capitalization for topic titles and section headings.

Use sentence-style capitalization for anything that reads as, or is similar to, a sentence. That is, it has a noun, verbs, participles, and the other parts of speech.

For the following components in Splunk docs, use these capitalization guidelines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Doc component</th>
<th>Capitalization style</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manual titles</td>
<td>Headline style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter titles</td>
<td>Sentence style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headings at any level, including headings in tables</td>
<td>Sentence style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List items</td>
<td>Sentence style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column headings in a table</td>
<td>Sentence style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UI text</td>
<td>See UI text style guidelines.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Don't capitalize terms that are normally capitalized as UI terms when they refer to concepts instead. See the following examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>UI term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept</td>
<td>UI term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Users with admin privileges can change the server settings.</td>
<td>Click <strong>Settings &gt; Server Settings</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify the number of indexers in your deployment.</td>
<td>Click <strong>Data &gt; Indexers</strong>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Content structure

Manual names, topic titles, and section headings

Succinct and descriptive names for manuals, chapters, topics, and sections let a user know what they can expect to find in the content. Titles that include the product name tell readers which product they are in when they land on your topic from a search. Clear headings support the reader's ability to locate information on the page quickly.

Best practices

- Include the product name in the topic title. If the product name is too long, use an approved abbreviation.
- Write titles and headings using words that are short, descriptive, and specific.
- Focus titles and headings around what a user can do with the product. Stay away from creating titles and headings that describe a feature.
- Remove vague terms or phrases in titles and headings, such as "Other", "Miscellaneous", "Introduction", or "Before you begin" and use definitive language instead.
- Don't use special formatting in headings, such as monospaced font or italics.

Name your manual

Create your manual name using an imperative statement with the product name. If the product name is very long, you can use the product abbreviation at the end of the title, as long as the abbreviation is approved.

Avoid terms such as "Guide" or "Manual" in the manual name, and find a descriptive verb to accompany the product in the manual name instead. You can also use a noun that describes the content, such as Release Notes, Use Cases, Tutorial, and API Reference.

Use headline-style capitalization for manual names. See Capitalization.

**Manual name examples**

The following table shows examples of good manual names:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original name</th>
<th>A clearer, more descriptive name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admin Guide</td>
<td>Administer Splunk Enterprise Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Installation Guide</td>
<td>Install and Upgrade Splunk Enterprise Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting Data In</td>
<td>Get Data into Splunk User Behavior Analytics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dashboard Manual</td>
<td>Use Splunk Enterprise Security Dashboards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrate SAI</td>
<td>Integrate the Splunk App for Infrastructure with ITSI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search Data</td>
<td>Search and Visualize Data with Splunk NLP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Heading levels in your content**

Refer to the following terms when you create your manual:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heading level</th>
<th>What it means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of content</td>
<td>Mood or phrase to use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task information</td>
<td>Imperative. Use command verbs in the present tense, such as &quot;edit&quot; or &quot;modify&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference information</td>
<td>Noun phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correct: ITSI REST API reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incorrect: Using the ITSI REST API reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual information</td>
<td>Gerund phrase or noun phrase in the declarative mood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Use the redistribute
command

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of content</th>
<th>Mood or phrase to use</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Use the redistribute command</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Topic title and section heading examples**

The following table shows examples of good topic titles and section headings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original title</th>
<th>A clearer, more descriptive title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Import entities</td>
<td>Import entities into ITSI from a CSV file</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create and manage apps</td>
<td>Create and manage apps for Splunk Cloud Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the Splunk App for CEF</td>
<td>How the Splunk App for CEF works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Configure inputs</td>
<td>Configure inputs for the Splunk Add-on for AWS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Context-friendly headings**

Write headings that users can understand without the context of the surrounding topics or sections. For example, don't include numbered steps in titles or headings, such as "Step 5: Move the cursor." A supertask might be a better way to organize your content than to include numbered steps in the title or heading. See Write a supertask.

**Can I write a title or heading in the form of a question?**

You can write topic titles or section headings in the form of a question, but use this form sparingly.

**Write a task**

Write a task to help a user take action. Present a task using a numbered list, which is sometimes called an ordered list or task list. A task must contain more than one step.

Follow these steps to write a basic task:

1. Create a topic, section, or subsection.
2. Type a descriptive heading in active voice and the imperative mood at the H1, H2, or H3 level.
3. (Optional) Type context for the task in an introductory paragraph.
4. If the task has prerequisites, include a prerequisites section.
5. Include a numbered list of the task steps.

   If the results of the step aren't obvious, add a step result on the next line in the same step.

   If the results of the task aren't obvious, add a task result in a separate paragraph outside of the numbered list.

For more information about numbered lists, see Numbered lists. For details about prerequisites, see Include prerequisites in a task.

**Write a task step**

Avoid writing tasks that contain multiple actions in each step. Assigning a single action to a step makes the task easier to follow.
The following example assigns a single action to each step:

1. Navigate to the **Search** page in the **Search & Reporting** app.
2. Create a search.
3. Select **Save As > Alert**.

### Include an optional step

Indicate that a step is optional by prefacing the step with the word "Optional" in parentheses. Don't use a colon, bold type, or italics. See the following example:

1. (Optional) Configure a trigger throttling period.

### Include a conditional step

A conditional step is a step that applies only to a set of users. Conditional steps differ from optional steps in that a user must still do it if it applies to their situation. Make sure that you construct conditional steps with an if-then sentence structure. You can write conditional steps as either a new step or a step result to an existing step.

The following example is of a conditional new step:

1. Select your connector and click **Save**.
2. If you're editing a connection that's being used by an active pipeline, then reactivate that pipeline after making your changes.

The following example is of a conditional step result:

1. Save the file and close it.
   If the editor asks whether you want to overwrite the file, then answer **yes**.

### Include other elements in a task

If needed, you can include the following elements in a task:

- Substeps
- Tables
- Code blocks
- Searches
- Images
- Bulleted lists
- Links to reference material

When adding these elements to a task, consider the visual and cognitive complexity of your task. When used judiciously, these elements can increase the usability of your task. For example, a table can be a good way to present descriptions of choices, options, and fields that a user might encounter in a task. However, more elements increase the complexity of a task and can make it harder to follow along.

Avoid including links in steps within a task unless you're linking to required reference material, such as configuration files. If links to other types of material are needed to complete the task, consider adding a Prerequisites section before the task. See **Include prerequisites in a task**. If the task requires the user to complete other tasks in succession, consider using a supertask instead. See **Write a supertask**.

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Avoid adding notes and cautions to a step. Instead, consider adding a note or caution outside of the task.

**Task example**

The following task uses a descriptive heading that provides context for the task. Each step in the task contains a single action written in the imperative mood. The task also includes a table as an additional element.

**Add new metric lanes**

1. In the *Deep Dive* dashboard, select **Add Lane > Add Metric Lane**.
2. Configure the following settings to add your new metric lane:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Title for new metric lane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtitle (optional)</td>
<td>Additional info about search, service, and so on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graph Type</td>
<td>Line, area, or column</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graph Color</td>
<td>Color for metric lane graph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lane Size</td>
<td>Small, medium, or large</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Click **Create Lane**. Your new metric lane appears in the Deep Dives dashboard.
4. Select the **Primary Time Range** for your metric lane.
   The Primary Time Range applies to all lanes on the Deep Dives dashboard.

**Include prerequisites in a task**

If a task has prerequisites, you must add headings to the task before the ordered list to separate the prerequisites from the steps in the task. Prerequisites can include links to other topics.

The following example describes how to format prerequisites in a task:

**Prerequisites**

Review topics about tasks in the *Splunk Style Guide*. See [Write a task](#).

**Steps**

1. After the description of the task and any context, type the word **Prerequisites** with initial capitalization, and apply bold formatting.
2. Type the prerequisites for the task in complete sentences.
   - If there is only one prerequisite, use a paragraph. If there is more than one prerequisite, use a bulleted list.
3. Type the word **Steps** with initial capitalization, and apply bold formatting.
4. Include the numbered list for the task.
Write a supertask

Write a supertask when the user must complete a list of tasks in succession. The steps in a supertask are links to other tasks. The tasks in a supertask must be completed in order and are linked together by prerequisites and postrequisites.

Supertask example

See Add asset and identity data to Splunk Enterprise Security in Administer Splunk Enterprise Security.

See also section

A See also section is a section at the end of a topic that provides a list of links to related topics. When creating a See also section, use the heading "See also". Don't use "Learn more" or any other name.

When to include a See also section

Most Splunk documentation topics don't need a See also section, but a See also section can be beneficial for specific types of topics. For example, consider including a See also section for these types of content:

- In a reference topic. For example, in a command reference topic, it's useful to include a See also section to point the reader to related commands.
- In a use case topic. For example, if a topic provides a high-level use case, it might be useful to include a See also section with links to detailed information on how to perform the tasks described in the use case.
- In a manual landing page. It's often useful to include a See also section in the first topic in a manual that has links to information the user might be looking for.

When not to include a See also section

Don't include a See also section in the following circumstances:

- In a conceptual or task topic.
- If the links are a laundry list of related topics. Don't include links to other topics on the basis that they are about the same feature.
- If you can place the link in the same paragraph as the relevant content.
- In a topic that has a Next step section.

For guidance on linking in Splunk documentation, see Best practices for including links.

Next step section

A Next step section is a section at the end of a topic that contains a sentence that describes the next step in a process with a link to that step. A Next step section is appropriate only for content that is comprised of a series of steps that the user must complete in a specific order.

When creating a Next step section, use the heading "Next step". Make sure to write the heading in the singular as "Next step" as opposed to "Next steps" because you can logically have only one next step. Don't include more than one step in the section.
When to include a Next step section

Consider including a Next step section for the following types of content:

- In a tutorial topic. Tutorials are usually organized into parts. Include a Next step section at the end of each part with a link to the next part.
- In a supertask. A supertask is a list of tasks that a user must complete in succession. Each step in a supertask is a link to a task. You can include a Next step section at the end of a task with a link to the next task in the supertask.

See Write a supertask for more information about supertasks.

When not to include a Next step section

Don't include a Next step section in the following circumstances:

- In a reference, conceptual, or standalone task topic.
- If the link is to the next topic in the table of contents, but is not a task the user must complete next.
- In a topic that has a See also section.
### Formatting text

#### Formatting quick reference

Review the following formatting guidelines for commonly documented elements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>How to format</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Code samples</td>
<td>Monospaced font block</td>
<td>See the following examples:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Pass values to the class constructor in the Splunk Developer Portal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Test the script in the <em>Securing Splunk Enterprise</em> manual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Command line arguments in a numbered list</td>
<td>Monospaced font block</td>
<td>See the following examples:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or longer than one line</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Edit Splunk UBA properties in the uba-site.properties file in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Administer Splunk User Behavior Analytics</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Set a secret key on the deployer in the Splunk Enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Distributed Search</em> manual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Command line arguments in a paragraph</td>
<td>Inline monospaced font</td>
<td>You can also use the command line by entering ./splunk apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>cluster-bundle in the CLI.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Configuration file parameters, arguments,</td>
<td>Inline monospaced font</td>
<td>Set the <code>maxDist</code> value to 60 in the fields.conf file.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and stanza names in a paragraph</td>
<td></td>
<td>Edit the <code>{splunktcp}</code> stanza.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Configuration file stanzas</td>
<td>Monospaced font block</td>
<td>See the following examples:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• <code>props.conf</code> in the <em>Admin Manual</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Rules Engine properties reference in ITSI in the <em>Splunk ITSI</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Event Analytics Manual</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error messages</td>
<td>Quotation marks</td>
<td>If you see an error message such as &quot;Invalid input value&quot;, the add-on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>was unable to generate a certificate with the provided information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressions</td>
<td>Inline monospaced font</td>
<td>Ensure <code>delay &gt; 10</code> evaluates to True.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>File names</td>
<td>No formatting</td>
<td>Navigate to the fields.conf file.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>File paths and file path variables</td>
<td>Inline monospaced font</td>
<td>Surround any changeable variables with angle brackets. See the following</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>example: <code>/home/&lt;username&gt;/login</code>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keyboard shortcuts</td>
<td>No formatting</td>
<td>Press Ctrl+Alt+Delete.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge objects such as fields, event</td>
<td>Inline monospaced font</td>
<td>The default field <code>index</code> identifies the index in which the event is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>types, lookups, tags, aliases, and data</td>
<td></td>
<td>located.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>models</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual titles</td>
<td>Italics</td>
<td>See Get started with getting data in in the <em>Getting Data In</em> manual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menu items and UI page elements such as</td>
<td>Bold</td>
<td>Select <strong>Settings &gt; Data inputs.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fields, panels, windows, and dialog boxes</td>
<td></td>
<td>In the <em>Set Source Type</em> step of the <em>Add Data</em> wizard, click <strong>Timestamp</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quotation marks</td>
<td>In the <em>Name</em> field, enter your name.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Search for &quot;Query tables&quot; on the Microsoft website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Element</td>
<td>How to format</td>
<td>Example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offset words that aren't part of the meaning of your sentence</td>
<td></td>
<td>Submit a GET request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REST API methods</td>
<td>No formatting</td>
<td>See the following example: Input endpoint descriptions in the Splunk Enterprise REST API Reference Manual.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| REST API requests and responses              | Monospaced font block | See the following example: See the following examples:  
- Dispatching searches section in Search your data using the Search service in Splunk Cloud Services in the Splunk Developer Portal. |
| Search                                       | Search bar or monospaced font block | Enter |inputlookup ca_county_lookup to test your geospatial lookup.  
Use the geom command to perform the lookup.  
Use the apply function. |
| Search content, functions, and SPL commands| Inline monospaced font | Enter |inputlookup ca_county_lookup to test your geospatial lookup.  
Use the geom command to perform the lookup.  
Use the apply function. |
| Search results                               | Search table  | See the following example: untable in the Splunk Enterprise Search Reference manual.                                                   |
| Simple XML elements                          | Inline monospaced font | Find the <title>all</title> element.                                                                                                  |
| Simple XML source code for dashboards       | Monospaced font block | See the following example: Simple XML Reference in the Splunk Enterprise Dashboards and Visualizations manual.                       |
| Source types                                 | Inline monospaced font | This entry defines the access_combined source type.                                                                                     |
| Splexicon links                              | Bold           | Use geospatial lookups to return results that Splunk software can use to generate a choropleth map visualization.                     |
| Tenant names                                 | No formatting  | Use the system tenant.                                                                                                                  |
| Token names                                  | No formatting  | Update your access token.                                                                                                               |
| User input                                   | Bold           | For the Destination field, enter ca_counties.                                                                                           |
| User roles and capabilities                  | No formatting  | You need the admin role to configure the settings.                                                                                      |
|                                             |                | If the user holds the admin_all_objects capability, they can make changes to any object on the instance.                               |

**Bold type**

Use bold type to highlight the name of a UI element in a paragraph or task step. You don't need to bold these elements in task or step results.

Use bold type to format the following elements:

- Menu items
- Splexicon links
- UI page elements in paragraphs or task steps, such as fields, panels, windows, and dialog boxes
- User input
Don't use bold type or strong tags for emphasis.

For a full list of formatting rules for commonly documented elements, including all of the elements that take bold type, see Formatting quick reference.

**Italics**

Use italics for manual titles.

Don't use italics to emphasize your text.

For a full list of formatting rules for commonly documented elements, including all of the elements that take italics, see Formatting quick reference.

**Line breaks**

Split up long lines of code with line breaks so that the lines of code fit within the page width and don't extend off the screen.

When deciding where to break a search string, prioritize the break based on the following list:

1. Before a pipe
2. At a space
3. Before an open parenthesis or bracket
4. After a close parenthesis or bracket
5. Before or after an equal sign
6. Before or after any equation symbol, such as * / + > < or -
7. After a dot, such as in a URL

**Line break example**

Consider the following search:

```
sourcetype=access_* status=200 action=purchase clientip=87.194.216.51 | stats count, distinct_count(productId), values(productId) by clientip
```

Because this search is longer than one line, a logical place to break this line is between `clientip=87.194.216.51` and `| stats`, rather than between `count,` and `distinct_count(productId)`.

The break appears as follows:

```
sourcetype=access_* status=200 action=purchase clientip=87.194.216.51 | stats count, distinct_count(productId), values(productId) by clientip
```

**Monospaced font**

Use monospaced font and monospaced font blocks in text paragraphs and tables. Don't use monospaced font in headings or subheadings.
**Inline monospaced font**

Format the following elements as inline monospaced font:

- Command line arguments in a paragraph
- Configuration file parameters, arguments, and stanza names in a paragraph
- Expressions
- File paths
- File path variables that might change based on OS
- Search content, functions, and SPL commands
- Simple XML elements
- Source types

**Monospaced font blocks**

Format the following elements as monospaced font blocks on its own line:

- Code samples
- Command line arguments in a numbered list or longer than one line
- Configuration file stanzas
- REST API requests and responses
- Simple XML source code for dashboards

For a full list of formatting rules for commonly documented elements, including all of the elements that take monospaced font, see [Formatting quick reference](#).
Images

Best practices for including images

Images can enhance technical documentation when the product UI or workflow that you're describing is complex or difficult to understand. Use a screenshot, diagram, or GIF to clarify a process or provide conceptual information. Use an inline image if a UI element is unclear. In all cases, images supplement rather than replace written content.

Images must include additional text to assist users with visual disabilities. For more information on making images accessible in Splunk docs, see Write docs for everyone.

When to include an image

Consider using an image in the following circumstances:

- The UI requires complex interactions.
- You need to orient users to a screen that has many functional parts.
- You need to illustrate complex relationships among discrete parts of a product.
- You need to diagram or illustrate conceptual information.
- You need to illustrate several steps in a complex or intricate process.
- There are design problems in the UI or workflow.

Before you create an image

Before you create an image, consider the following approaches:

- Consider whether you can use a table or list instead of a screenshot to convey the information you want to capture. For example, you can display forms and search results in a table.
- Understand that the information you capture in an image might change in the next release. Consider whether you're willing to update the image every time the UI or process changes and maintain it for every release.
- Whenever possible, reuse an existing image instead of creating a new one. Consider whether you can use the same image for multiple steps or procedures.

After you create an image

Once you've placed an image in your documentation, complete the following tasks:

- Make sure your images are accurate and up-to-date before release.
- Introduce each image with a full sentence that describes its contents.
- Always include alt text with an image. See Including alt text.

When to avoid including an image

Avoid the following uses and types of images in your documentation:

- Don't include an image to replace or avoid writing an explanation about how to complete a task.
- Don't include a screenshot of the UI if the user can follow your written instructions without it. A well-designed UI doesn't need an accompanying screenshot in the documentation.
- Don't use photographs in your docs.
• Don’t include an image if it contains customer data or Splunk data.

Types of images

Splunk docs include the following types of images:

- Screenshots
- Diagrams
- GIFs
- Inline images

Images can help clarify your writing, but they must never replace your content. See Best practices for including images before including an image in your content.

Screenshots

You can use a screenshot to help users understand complicated UI workflows. Screenshots can be especially useful in content that is primarily task information, such as tutorials and use cases, and in content for audiences who are new to the product. Screenshots are less useful in concept, reference, or troubleshooting information.

See the following example of a screenshot:

Diagrams

You can use a diagram to help users understand complex system architecture, task flows, processes, and conceptual information. Diagrams supplement your content, so don’t replace your writing with a diagram. It’s okay if a diagram has text in it.

See the following example of a diagram:
GIFs

You can use an animated GIF to demonstrate steps in a UI. Use an animated GIF to supplement task information or paragraph text, so don't remove essential text in favor of a GIF.

See the following example of an animated GIF:
**Inline images**

You can use an inline image in a sentence to label a UI element, such as a toolbar icon or a button.

See the following example of an inline image:

Click the gear icon (⚙️).
Links

Best practices for including links

Good linking, sometimes known as cross-referencing, guides a user through a multi-topic task and provides access to related material without diverting the reader from the focus of the topic. Don't expect users to read topics sequentially or use the sidebar for navigation. If related topics in your chapter or manual add value to your content, consider linking to them in the topic.

Before adding links into your content, consider these best practices:

- Don't add links to headings or the first paragraph of a topic.
- Provide critical information in your topic, not in linked information.
- Weigh any cost of including a link, such as distraction or confusion to the reader, against the benefits.
- Provide context to the link so readers can decide whether they need to click.
- Use links in notes or cautions only if it helps the reader complete the task or aids their understanding of the note or caution content.

Use these best practices to make docs accessible for all audiences. For additional guidance on making docs more accessible using links, see Write docs for everyone.

Links for Splexicon entries and download files

You can include links to Splexicon entries and download files as part of your sentence. You don't need to use a "See" reference to introduce the link.

Splexicon entries

Links to Splexicon entries help familiarize users with Splunk-specific terms. Link only to terms that your audience might be unfamiliar with, and include the link at the first instance of the term you want to define. Bold the Splexicon term. See the following examples:

- You must configure the receiving port on the peer.
- The universal forwarder collects data from a data source or another forwarder and sends it to a different forwarder or a deployment.

Download files

When you link to a downloadable file, use the file name or document name as the display name of the link. See the following examples:

- Download the tutorialdata.zip file.
**Links to Splunk materials**

When linking to Splunk materials, follow these formatting rules:

- Use the word "See" to introduce a link in the sentence or clause. Use the full topic title as the display name for the link.
- Don't use quotation marks, bold, or other emphasis in the link text.
- Use italics only for the manual name.
- Use the full name of the item you are linking to. Don't paraphrase the linked-to topic name.
- Keep punctuation that isn't part of the title outside of the link.

**Correct**

To add additional roles, you can create custom roles. See Create a custom role.

**Incorrect**

To add additional roles, you can create custom roles.

When linking to Splunk materials, format the links according to this table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When linking to this type of material</th>
<th>Include this information in the link</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A product</td>
<td>Link to the documentation home page for that product.</td>
<td>For information about Splunk Enterprise, see the Splunk Enterprise documentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A manual</td>
<td>Link to the first topic of the manual. Use the manual name as the display name for the link. Italicize the manual name.</td>
<td>To learn about getting data into Splunk Enterprise, see <em>Getting Data In</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A chapter</td>
<td>Link to the first topic in the chapter. Use the name of the chapter as the display name for the link.</td>
<td>To learn about configuring timestamps, see <em>Configure timestamps</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A topic in the same manual</td>
<td>When linking to a topic in the same manual, use the full topic name. Don't include the name of the manual.</td>
<td>See <em>Get Windows Data into Splunk Cloud</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A topic in a different manual</td>
<td>When linking to a topic in a different manual in the same product, include the manual name in italics.</td>
<td>See About data models in the <em>Knowledge Manager Manual</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A topic in a different product</td>
<td>When linking to a topic in a manual in a different product, include the product name before the manual name. However, if the manual name refers to the product name, don't include the product name. Italicize the manual name.</td>
<td>See Modify event processing in the Splunk Cloud <em>Getting Data In</em> manual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A subheading</td>
<td>When linking to a subheading within the same topic, refer users to the section by name, but don't use a link. Avoid linking to a subheading within a different topic. If a subheading ever changes, any links to it break.</td>
<td>See Create workload pools in this topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloud and Enterprise manuals from app</td>
<td>When the target of a link is different for Splunk Cloud and Splunk Enterprise, display the links for both products in a bulleted list.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When linking to this type of material</td>
<td>Include this information in the link</td>
<td>Example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| documentation                       |                                      | • For Splunk Enterprise, see Using the alert actions manager in the Splunk Enterprise Alerting Manual.  
• For Splunk Cloud, see Using the alert actions manager in the Splunk Cloud Alerting Manual. |
| A Splunk resource                    | Name the Splunk resource so the reader knows where the link is taking them. Use the name of the page or item as the display name of the link. | Download the Splunk Add-on for Microsoft Cloud Services from Splunkbase.  
Download the Splunk Universal Forwarder for your operating system from the Splunk website.  
See Develop apps and add-ons for Splunk Enterprise on the Splunk Developer Portal.  
See the Splunk Blogs post Data Sherlock: The Change of Perspective.  
See Questions related to Splunk Add-on for Amazon Web Services on Splunk Answers.  
To file a ticket on the Splunk Support Portal, see Support and Services. |

**Links to third-party websites**

Avoid creating deep links to specific pages outside of the Splunk website. Instead, consider other ways you can direct users to the information. If you must include third-party information, refer to outside material by giving a search term, such as the topic name and website name. See the following examples:

- Search for "Query tables" on the Microsoft website.
- For details, see Connecting to WMI Remotely Starting with Vista on the Microsoft website.

Sometimes, linking to a third-party website might be necessary. If you must provide a link, consider the stability of the link and check that links to third-party websites still work with every release. Include "http://www" or "https://www".

For information on including third-party information in Splunk documentation, see [Documenting third-party software](#).
Lists

Best practices for writing with lists

Lists organize information so that readers can scan content faster.

When you include lists in your content, consider these best practices:

- Introduce lists with a complete lead-in sentence.
- Lists must have more than one item.
- Lists can only have two levels.
  - The second level is called a sublist.
  - Sublists must have more than one item.
- Capitalize the first letter of every list item.
- If the list items are complete sentences, include end punctuation.
- If the list items are characters, words, or phrases, don't include end punctuation.
- Use parallel sentence construction in list items. For example, start all lists items with verbs, or end all list items with punctuation.
- Avoid including links that move users away from a list of tasks.
- If you must include a link, don't hyperlink the entire list item unless it's supertask information or a prerequisite.
- Use lists in tables sparingly.

Use these best practices to make docs accessible for all audiences. For more guidance on making docs more accessible using lists, see Write docs for everyone.

Choose the best list

Choose one of three lists based on your content:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of list</th>
<th>When to use</th>
<th>More information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulleted list</td>
<td>Use when the list item order isn't important, such as a list of options.</td>
<td>See Bulleted lists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbered list</td>
<td>Use when the order of the list items is important or the user is following sequential steps, such as a task.</td>
<td>See Numbered lists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition list</td>
<td>Use for a list of descriptions, definitions, associations, or explanations, such as a glossary or a set of terms.</td>
<td>See Definition lists.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bulleted lists

Use a bulleted list, sometimes called an unordered list, for a list in which the list item order isn't important, such as a list of options.

You can choose whether you want to alphabetize or apply a different order to bulleted list items.

Qualities of bulleted lists

Bulleted lists must have the following qualities:
• A complete lead-in sentence punctuated by a colon
• More than one list item
• Up to two levels
• Parallel sentence construction
• One sentence or idea for each list item
• End punctuation if the list items are complete sentences
• No end punctuation if the list items are characters, words, or phrases

For more guidance on using lists, see Best practices for writing with lists.

Example

The following example of a bulleted list contains a complete lead-in sentence. Each item in the list uses parallel construction and doesn't contain more than one phrase.

You can create the following types of Search Processing Language (SPL) commands:

• Eventing commands
• Generating commands
• Reporting commands
• Streaming commands

Numbered lists

Use numbered lists, sometimes called ordered lists or task lists, when the order of the list items is important, such as in procedural information or for sequential steps a user must follow.

Qualities of numbered lists

Numbered lists must have the following qualities:

• A complete lead-in sentence punctuated by a period or a colon
• More than one list item
• Up to two levels
• Parallel sentence construction
• One action for each list item
• End punctuation if the list items are complete sentences
• No end punctuation if the list items are characters, words, or phrases

For more guidance on using lists, see Best practices for writing with lists.

To learn more about writing tasks in numbered lists, see Write a task.

Example

The following example of a numbered list contains a complete lead-in sentence. Each item in the list contains a single action and uses parallel construction.
Create a real-time alert with per-result triggering

Real-time alerts with per-result triggering, also called per-result alerts, use a continuous real-time search to look for events. Each search result triggers the alert.

1. Navigate to the Search page in the Search & Reporting app.
2. Create a search.
3. Select Save As > Alert.
4. Type a title and optional description.
5. Specify permissions.
6. Select the Real-time alert type.
7. Select the Per-Result trigger option.
8. (Optional) Configure a trigger throttling period.
9. Select at least one alert action that occurs when the alert triggers.
10. Click Save.

Definition lists

Use a definition list to define a set of terms, descriptions, explanations, or associations.

You can add a paragraph break after each definition if the formatting is tight.

Qualities of definition lists

Definition lists must have the following qualities:

- A complete lead-in sentence
- More than one defined term
- Up to two levels: the term, which is in bold and on its own line, and the definition, which is at least one full sentence indented on its own line
- Parallel sentence construction
- One action for each list item
- End punctuation in every definition line

For more guidance on using lists, see Best practices for writing with lists.

Example

The following example of a definition list contains a complete lead-in sentence. Each item in the list uses parallel construction and complete sentences.

Splunk Cloud differs from Splunk Enterprise in the following ways:

Command line interface (CLI)

Splunk Cloud customers don't have access to the command line. Splunk Support must perform tasks that require CLI access.

Apps

Only Splunk inspected and approved apps are permitted to run in a Splunk Cloud deployment.

License pooling

Splunk Cloud doesn't allow license pooling.
Two-factor authentication
Splunk Cloud doesn't support two-factor authentication.
Notes and cautions

Best practices for using callout boxes

Note and caution callout boxes allow you to highlight information on a page by surrounding text with a colored box.

Before you include a callout box

Before you add multiple callout boxes to a topic, consider how the callouts look on the page. They might distract readers and affect the scannability of a topic.

If a callout box isn't necessary in your content, consider weaving that information into the introduction or as part of the instructions you're creating. If the content of the note isn't relevant to your content, your reader might ignore future callout boxes.

Guidelines for using callout boxes

Follow these guidelines when you use note and caution callout boxes:

- Avoid writing long notes and cautions.
- Place notes and cautions after the text they pertain to.
- Don't confuse a note or caution with a prerequisite. See Include prerequisites in a task.
- It's okay to follow steps in a task with a note or caution, but make sure that the user doesn't need that information before they begin the task.
- Use links in notes or cautions only if including the link helps the reader be successful with the task or their understanding of the content.
- Don't use a note or caution immediately after a topic title or section heading.

Don't use other tags, styles, formatting, or words for notes and cautions inside the callout boxes. For example, don't use the term "Important" or "Tip" as a note label. The term "Warning" is used for danger and injury and is generally associated with hardware documentation.

For more guidance on when to use each type of callout box, see Note callout boxes and Caution callout boxes.

Note callout boxes

Use a note callout box to provide an important piece of information or a tip that isn't an integral part of the content but that adds clarity or more information.

Use note callout boxes in the following situations:

- To supplement a point in the main text
- To supply information that applies in special cases
- To suggest alternative methods

For more guidance on using note callout boxes, see Best practices for using callout boxes.
Caution callout boxes

Use a caution callout box to provide critical information that a user can't reverse if they continue with the task.

Use caution callout boxes in the following situations:

- To warn a user of data loss
- To warn a user that an action can corrupt their data
- To let a user know that there's a consequence they can't reverse
- To tell a user to back up their data before they continue

For more guidance on using caution callout boxes, see Best practices for using callout boxes.
Numbers

Numerals or words?

When writing about numbers that appear in a UI, duplicate them exactly as the UI displays. Otherwise, follow these guidelines.

Spell out numbers from zero to nine. Use the numeral if the number is 10 or greater. Use a comma in a number that has four or more digits, but don't use a comma in years. See the following examples:

- Zero downtime
- 10 forwarders
- 1,045 MB
- April 22, 2019

For more information about commas and decimals, see Commas and decimals.

Be consistent

If a single-digit number appears in a sentence with another number that is 10 or greater, then use numerals for all numbers in that sentence. See the following examples:

- From the 10 menu options, select your top 5 choices.
- Modify the memory usage threshold from 8% to 15%.
- An 8 CPU, 10 GB memory machine can achieve 50-60 Mb per second throughput.

Don't start a sentence with a numeral

Avoid starting a sentence with a numeral. Instead, rewrite the sentence so the number comes later in the sentence or is prefaced by a modifier. If you can't rewrite the sentence, spell out the number at the beginning of the sentence. See the following examples:

- More than 10 add-ons are available.
- This cluster contains 11 peers.

When to use numerals

Use numerals for numbers associated with dates, decimals, fractions, measurements, percentages, ranges, time, versions, weight, and other data for comparison or analysis. It's okay to use numerals in tables or in text with limited space. Review the following table for examples of when to use numerals in text:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use numerals for</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>For more information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>April 22, 2019</td>
<td>See Dates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decimals</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>See Commas and decimals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions</td>
<td>1280 x 1024</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>4 feet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Use numerals for numbers associated with dates, even if the number is less than 10. Spell out the day of the week and the month. Don't use ordinals, such as 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and so on. See the following examples:

- April 22
- Monday, April 22
- Monday, April 22, 2019
- April 2019

Commas and decimals

When writing about numbers that appear in a Splunk UI, duplicate them exactly as the UI displays. Otherwise, follow these guidelines.

Use standard American-style formatting for commas and decimal points in numbers.

Commas

When writing numerals that are four or more digits long, use commas to set off groups of three digits.

See the following examples:

- 1,852,762
- 2,000
Decimals

When writing numerals with a decimal, use a period for the decimal point and include up to two decimal places. For an amount less than 1, use a leading 0 before the decimal point.

See the following examples:

- 0.05
- 3.14

Fractions

When writing about numbers that appear in a Splunk UI, duplicate them exactly as the UI displays. Otherwise, follow these guidelines.

Generic fractions

If you’re referring to a generic fraction and not one that refers back to a specific number, hyphenate the spelled-out fraction.

Correct
- The system parsed two-thirds of the events.

Incorrect
- The system parsed 2/3rds of the events.
- The system parsed 2/3 of the events.

Numerical fractions

Use numerals and forward slashes with no additional formatting to represent numerical fractions.

Correct
- 1/2
- 3/4

Incorrect
- ½
- ¾

Add a space and remove the hyphen between a whole number and fraction.

Correct
- 70 1/2

Incorrect
- 70½
- 70-½
- 70-1/2
Measurements

When writing about numbers that appear in a Splunk UI, duplicate them exactly as the UI displays. Otherwise, follow these guidelines.

Use a numeral when quantifying a unit of measurement or a rate. Add a space between the numeral and the rate measurement. Use the word "per" to describe a volume measurement. See the following examples:

Correct
8 GB of memory
An 8 CPU, 16 GB memory machine can achieve 50-60 Mb per second throughput.
50-60 Mbps

Incorrect
8GB of memory
An 8 CPU, 16 GB memory machine can achieve 50-60 Mb/second throughput.
50 to 60 Mbps

It's okay to abbreviate a unit of measurement in text. Ensure that you use the correct capitalization of the unit of measurement that you're referring to.

For example, use a capital "B" when referring to a multiple of the unit byte and a lowercase "b" when referring to a multiple of the unit bit. Review the following table for the correct capitalization of these units of measurement:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kilobit</td>
<td>Kb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kilobyte</td>
<td>KB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>megabit</td>
<td>Mb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>megabyte</td>
<td>MB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gigabit</td>
<td>Gb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gigabyte</td>
<td>GB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>terabit</td>
<td>Tb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>terabyte</td>
<td>TB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>petabit</td>
<td>Pb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>petabyte</td>
<td>PB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Phone numbers

When you write out a telephone number, start with the country code preceded by a plus (+) sign. Use dashes to separate numbers in the phone number. Don't use parentheses or periods to separate the numbers.

See the following examples:

- +1-888-555-1212
- +86-10-6552-9988

For information on creating fictitious example phone numbers in your docs, see [Example names and domains](#).
Ranges

When writing about numbers that appear in a Splunk UI, duplicate them exactly as the UI displays. Otherwise, follow these guidelines.

Use numerals when referring to numbers in a range. Do this even if the number is less than 10. Use a hyphen with no space before or after it in a range. See the following examples:

- 50-60 GB
- 9 AM-5 PM

Time

When writing about numbers that appear in a Splunk UI, duplicate them exactly as the UI displays. Otherwise, follow these guidelines.

Duration of time

Always use a numeral for numbers associated with duration of time. Do this even if the number is less than 10. See the following examples:

- Change the default from 6 seconds to 60 seconds.
- Authentication expires after 2 hours.
- The instance remains active for 3 months.

Time of day

Always use a number for numbers associated with time of day. Do this even if the number is less than 10. See the following example:

- Office hours are from 6 AM-5 PM.

12-hour clock

Use 12-hour time. For full hours, don't include the minutes. Capitalize AM and PM without using punctuation, and precede the time period with a space. See the following examples:

Correct

6 AM
2:30 PM

Incorrect

13.00 hours
21 30 hours
Versions

When writing about numbers that appear in a Splunk UI, duplicate them exactly as the UI displays. Otherwise, follow these guidelines.

Use numerals for numbers associated with versions. Do this even if the number is less than 10.

When referencing maintenance builds, minor versions, or releases for a product, use a lowercase "x" at the relevant place in the version name. Don't substitute "v" for version before the number. See the following examples:

- Splunk Enterprise 6.1.2
- Splunk Enterprise 7.x
- Splunk platform versions 6.6.x and 7.0.x
Punctuation and symbols

Show symbols in text

If you want to show a symbol in your text, write out the symbol first, and then refer to the symbol in parentheses with non-breaking spaces.

Correct
Begin the line with a forward slash (/).

Incorrect
Begin the line with a forward slash, /.
Begin the line with a /.

Ampersand

Don't use an ampersand in place of the word "and". Always write out "and" unless the ampersand is part of a proper name. See the following example:

- Search & Reporting app

Apostrophe

Don't use an apostrophe to make product names, company names, or trademarked terms possessive or plural.

Correct
The dashboard shows data pulled from the Splunk Enterprise internal log files.
Submit a case using the Splunk Support Portal.
The Search function has robust capabilities.

Incorrect
The dashboard shows data pulled from Splunk Enterprise's internal log files.
Submit a case using Splunk's Support portal.
Search's capabilities are robust.

Brackets

There are three kinds of brackets: angle brackets, curly braces, and square brackets.

Angle brackets (< and >)

Use angle brackets as a placeholder for variables you want the user to enter.

Correct
Type your user-specified domain in this format: https://<user-specified domain>.splunkcloud.com.

Incorrect
Type your user-specified domain in this format: https://{user-specified domain}.splunkcloud.com.
You can also use angle brackets to indicate navigation or a series of menu item clicks. See the following example:

- Select **Save As > Saved search > Close.**

**Curly braces ( { and } )**

Use curly braces only when they are part of a code sample or other string literal.

**Square brackets ( [ and ] )**

Use square brackets around a .conf file stanza name or within code.

Correct

```plaintext
Edit the [splunktcp] stanza.
Specify a subsearch that starts with this search command: tag=dns query [search tag=malware].
```

Incorrect

```plaintext
Type your user-specified domain in this format: https://[user-specified domain].splunkcloud.com.
```

**Colon**

These are the ways to use a colon properly in your writing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use case</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| To introduce unordered lists, tables, or images. Always precede lists, tables, and images with a full sentence. | Use a full sentence and a colon to introduce the following items:  
  - Unordered lists  
  - Tables  
  - Images |
| To introduce a list within a sentence. | The application can access the following items: the file system, the command line, and other applications. |

**Comma**

Although there are many rules for when to use a comma, these are the most common in Splunk documentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use case</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| To separate a list of three or more words or word groups. This type of comma is known as the serial, or Oxford, comma. | Generate reports, views, and dashboards.  
  *I'd like to thank my parents, Mother Teresa, and the pope.* |
<p>| To separate adjectives when they each modify the noun independently.   | The feature groups the extracted fields into a single, ordered sequence. |
| To offset appositives from the rest of the sentence.                  |                                                                         |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use case</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use wiki markup when you don't have any elements, such as code or a table, following a step.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After a prepositional phrase.</td>
<td>After reviewing the document, I had a chance to compile a list of reading material.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Don't use commas to separate two verb phrases that modify the same subject.

Correct
I collected the various pieces of documentation and forwarded them to the appropriate parties.

Incorrect
I collected the various pieces of documentation, and forwarded them to the appropriate parties.

**Dashes**

Don't use dashes to list items. Use a bulleted list.

**Hyphen (-)**

Use a hyphen for compound adjectives that precede the noun they modify, and don't use a hyphen if the adjectives follow the noun they modify. Don't add spaces before or after the hyphen.

Correct
a case-sensitive username
the password is case sensitive

Incorrect
a case sensitive username
the password is case-sensitive

**Em dash ( ? )**

Don't use em dashes in Splunk documentation. Keep your sentences short, and use two sentences or commas to separate breaks in thought.

**En dash ( ? )**

Don't use en dashes in Splunk documentation.

**Parentheses**

Make the point in each of your sentences without using parentheses. Don't use parentheses in place of commas, to enclose a complete sentence, or to include unnecessary information or an afterthought.

You can use parentheses to introduce an abbreviation.

Correct
Use the Splunk Search Processing Language (SPL) to search your data.

Incorrect
Use SPL (the Splunk Search Processing Language) to search your data.

You can use parentheses when explaining that a task is optional in a procedure. For more information, see Write a task.

Correct
(Optional) Type context for the task in a new paragraph.

Incorrect
Optional: Type context for the task in a new paragraph.
Type context for the task in a new paragraph (optional).

You can also use parentheses when writing about one or more fields in statistical commands and charting functions for SPL. See the following example:

- Use with `earliest(x)` and `latest(x)` to calculate the rate of increase.

Don't write a lowercase "s" or "es" in parentheses, "(s)" or "(es)", after a noun to indicate both singular and plural. Choose the best option for your documentation.

**Percent**

Use a numeral plus the percent sign ( % ) to specify an exact percentage in text and tables. Don't use the word "percent".

Correct
10%

Incorrect
Ten percent
10 percent

Use "percentage" as a noun when you're not specifying an exact quantity.

**Period**

Use a period at the end of full sentences, and don't use a period at the end of sentence fragments or after the last item in an unordered list. Use only one space after a period, or any other punctuation, that ends a complete sentence.

Be aware of the differences in these terms, which are all represented by a period character:

dot
The character used in domain names, email addresses, and computer files.

full stop
This term is traditionally British English. Don't use in Splunk documentation.

period
The name for the punctuation mark used at the end of a sentence.

point
The dot glyph used in numbers to separate the fractional part from the integer part.
Quotation marks

Use logical quotation and place punctuation, like commas and periods, outside of quotation marks. If you use only one set of quotation marks, use double quotation marks, not single.

Use double quotation marks to format the following elements:

- An actual quotation
- To offset words that aren’t part of the meaning of your sentence
- Error messages

Don’t use quotation marks for emphasis or to enclose the names of UI elements.

Correct
Search for "Query tables" on the Microsoft website. If you see an error message that says “The user isn’t authenticated”, try logging in again.

Incorrect
Enter "Filename" into the UI field. From the “Field” menu, select Filename.

For a full list of formatting rules for commonly documented elements, including the elements that take quotation marks, see Formatting quick reference.

Slashes

There are two kinds of slashes: the backslash and the forward slash.

Backslash ( \ )

Windows operating systems use backslashes in URL and URI paths. See file path in the Usage dictionary for examples of paths in the different operating systems.

Backslashes are also used in code.

Forward slash ( / )

A forward slash has multiple meanings:

- It can be a path divider for *nix operating systems. See file path in the Usage dictionary for examples of paths in the different operating systems.
- It can mean "and", "divide by", "or", "per", or "with". In most cases, use the word you intend instead of a slash. You can use the forward slash when you write about read, write, and delete permissions.

Correct
Add read/write permissions for all users.
All registration information is written to and stored in the database.
An 8 CPU, 16 GB memory machine can achieve 50-60 Mb per second throughput.

Incorrect
All registration information is written to/ stored in the database.
An 8 CPU, 16 GB memory machine can achieve 50-60 Mb/second throughput.

**Special characters**

Special characters are a selection of punctuation on a standard keyboard that are frequently used in passwords and sometimes in directories. Be explicit when referring to special characters. Use the following format when writing about them in text: the pipe (|) character, the at (@) symbol.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special character</th>
<th>What to call it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>`</td>
<td>Backtick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>~</td>
<td>Tilde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>!</td>
<td>Exclamation point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@</td>
<td>At sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Hashtag, number sign, octothorpe, pound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$</td>
<td>Dollar sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>Percent sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>^</td>
<td>Caret</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp;</td>
<td>Ampersand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>Asterisk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(</td>
<td>Left parenthesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>)</td>
<td>Right parenthesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Dash, hyphen, minus sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_</td>
<td>Underscore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=</td>
<td>Equal sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+</td>
<td>Plus sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[</td>
<td>Left bracket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{</td>
<td>Left brace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>]</td>
<td>Right bracket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>}</td>
<td>Right brace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\</td>
<td>Backslash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>:</td>
<td>Semicolon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.</td>
<td>Colon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'</td>
<td>Single quotation mark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Double quotation mark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>,</td>
<td>Comma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;</td>
<td>Less than, left-pointing angle bracket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special character</td>
<td>What to call it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.</td>
<td>Period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;</td>
<td>Greater than, right-pointing angle bracket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/</td>
<td>Forward slash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>Question mark</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Splunk terminology and trademarks

Splunk product terminology

Splunk docs use standard terms and definitions for Splunk software, certain combinations of Splunk software, and parts of Splunk product architecture. When used alone, "Splunk" refers only to the company, not to any product. Don't use "Splunk" in the possessive form.

Follow these usage guidelines to choose the correct term when you write about Splunk software.

The Splunk platform and Splunk software

Use the Splunk platform to refer collectively to Splunk core products: Splunk Enterprise, Splunk Cloud, and Splunk Light. Don't capitalize the "p" in "platform", and make sure you include a definite article.

Correct
   The Splunk platform
   the Splunk platform
Incorrect
   The Splunk Platform
   Splunk platform

Use Splunk software to refer to anything and everything the company offers. Don't capitalize the "s" in "software", and don't include a definite article.

Correct
   Splunk software
Incorrect
   The Splunk software
   The Splunk Software
   the Splunk Software
   Splunk Software

You can use "the Splunk platform" as a modifier. Avoid using "Splunk" as a modifier by itself when you are referring to a specific instance where the Splunk platform is installed, Splunk platform deployments, or the environment in which the Splunk platform is running.

Correct
   Restart the Splunk platform instance...
   In a distributed Splunk platform deployment...
   In your Splunk platform environment...
Incorrect
   Splunk platform server
   Splunk server
   Splunk deployment
   Splunk instance
   Splunk environment
   Splunk implementation
Choose the most specific and accurate term in each situation

When considering what noun to use when referring to a Splunk product, always use the most specific and accurate term that is appropriate for the situation. The following diagram shows the level of specificity for Splunk product terms:

Use these guidelines to determine which term to write:

- If you're thinking about using one of the core product terms (Splunk Enterprise, Splunk Cloud, or Splunk Light), consider whether a specific node of the product (the search head, the indexer cluster, Splunk Web, the data collection node, the deployment server, the forwarder, and so on) is more helpful for customers.
- When you are referring to a specific core product, name it.
- When you are referring to an app, name the app or write "the app".
- When you are referring to a core product but you don't know which core product the user has, write "the Splunk platform". This is common.
- Use "Splunk software" only when you are referring to one or more core products plus one or more apps, or when either a core product or an app could be the subject. This is the rarest case.

Examples

Here are examples of Splunk product terms in a sentence with an explanation of why the term in bold is the best term to use:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Configure your inputs on your <strong>data collection node</strong> using the inputs.conf file or Splunk Web.</td>
<td>The most specific and accurate term here is the node on which the configuration takes place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The performance of this application is dependent on a variety of factors, including the other <strong>Splunk apps</strong> that you have installed on the same <strong>search head</strong>.</td>
<td>Because this sentence is about search head performance, the node (search head) is the most specific and accurate term in this situation. Also, &quot;Splunk apps&quot; is the most specific and accurate term rather than</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This manual discusses high-level hardware guidance for **Splunk Enterprise** deployments and describes how **Splunk Enterprise** uses hardware resources in different situations. The **Capacity Planning Manual** applies only to Splunk Enterprise, so you can be specific and name the product.

The Splunk Datasets Add-on, available from Splunkbase, gives **Splunk Enterprise** users additional dataset management capabilities. **Splunk Cloud** users have the Splunk Datasets Add-on by default. ... In previous versions of the **Splunk platform**, data model datasets were called data model objects.

The initial entry point for this feature is different in Splunk Enterprise and Splunk Cloud, so the writer makes that clear up front by using the product names. For the remainder of the documentation, "the Splunk platform" is appropriate because it includes both Splunk Enterprise and Splunk Cloud.

Metrics is a feature of the **Splunk platform**. The metrics feature is available for Splunk Enterprise, Splunk Cloud, and Splunk Light, so the Metrics manual uses "the Splunk platform" to be inclusive of all platform types.

**Splunk IT Service Intelligence** uses the access control system integrated with the **Splunk platform**. You don't know whether the customer is administering ITSI on Splunk Enterprise or Splunk Cloud, so use "the Splunk platform" here to be inclusive of both.

**Splunk Education** offers a variety of courses and certification programs to help make you more productive with **Splunk software**. **Splunk Education** courses cover some premium apps as well as core product offerings, so using "Splunk software" is appropriate here.

If you have questions about the licenses that apply to the **Splunk software** you are using, contact Splunk Support. Some apps also have separate licenses and entitlements, so this more general term is appropriate here.

---

**Still not sure which term to use?**

Try these steps:

1. First, try to name the specific node or product. If that level of precision is appropriate, use that term.
2. If the specific node or product name isn't appropriate, try using "the Splunk platform". When you use "the Splunk platform" in the sentence, can you replace it with at least one of the following things and have the sentence still make sense?
   * "Splunk Enterprise or Splunk Cloud"
   * "Splunk Enterprise, Splunk Cloud, Splunk Light, or Splunk Light Cloud Service"
   * "Splunk Enterprise or Splunk Light"
   * "Splunk Cloud or Splunk Light Cloud Service"
   * "your forwarder (if you are in a distributed environment) or your single-instance deployment"
   
   If yes, use "the Splunk platform".
3. If "the Splunk platform" doesn't make sense, try using "Splunk software". When you use "Splunk software" in the sentence, can you replace it with at least one of the following things and have the sentence still make sense?
   * "the Splunk platform or a Splunk app"
   * "the Splunk platform or Splunk apps"
   * "the Splunk platform or some Splunk apps"
   * "Splunk Enterprise or Splunk apps"
   * "Splunk Enterprise or some Splunk apps"
   * "Splunk Cloud or cloud-supported Splunk apps"
   * "Splunk Light or Splunk-light-compatible add-ons"

   If yes, use "Splunk software". If no, ask the editing team for advice.
Splunk Web terminology

The Splunk platform GUI is called “Splunk Web”. The UI elements in Splunk Web have specific names.

Search Summary view

The Search Summary view includes common elements that you see on other views, including the Applications menu, the Splunk bar, the Apps bar, the Search bar, and the Time Range Picker. Elements that are unique to the Search Summary view are the panels below the Search bar: the How to Search panel, the What to Search panel, and the Search History panel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Applications menu</td>
<td>Switch between Splunk applications that you have installed. The current application, Search &amp; Reporting app, is listed. This menu is on the Splunk bar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Splunk bar</td>
<td>Edit your Splunk configuration, view system-level messages, and get help on using the product.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Apps bar</td>
<td>Navigate between the different views in the application you are in. For the Search &amp; Reporting app the views are: Search, Datasets, Reports, Alerts, and Dashboards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Search bar</td>
<td>Specify your search criteria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Time Range Picker</td>
<td>Specify the time period for the search, such as the last 30 minutes or yesterday. The default is Last 24 hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>How to search panel</td>
<td>Contains links to the Search Tutorial and Search Manual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>What to search panel</td>
<td>Shows a summary of the data that is uploaded on to this Splunk platform instance and that you are authorized to view.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Search history panel</td>
<td>View a list of the searches that you have run. The search history appears after you run your first search.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New Search view

The New Search view opens after you run a search.

Some of the elements in this view might be familiar, such as the Apps bar, the Search bar, and the Time Range Picker. Below the Search bar are the Timeline, the Fields sidebar, and the Events viewer.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Apps bar</td>
<td>Navigate between the different views in the Search &amp; Reporting app.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Search bar</td>
<td>Specify your search criteria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Time Range Picker</td>
<td>Specify the time period for the search.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Timeline</td>
<td>A visual representation of the number of events that occur at each point in time. Peaks or valleys in the timeline can indicate spikes in activity or server downtime. The timeline options are located above the timeline. You can zoom in, zoom out, and change the scale of the chart.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Fields sidebar</td>
<td>Displays a list of the fields discovered in the events. The fields are grouped into Selected Fields and Interesting Fields.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Events viewer</td>
<td>Displays the events that match your search. By default, the most recent event is listed first. In each event, the matching search terms are highlighted. To change the event view, use the List, Format, and Per Page options.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Trademark attribution**

When you write Splunk docs, don't add trademark attribution for Splunk products. Splunk trademarked items are in the footer of the splunk.com webpage.

Use Splunk as a noun if you mean the company. Don't use Splunk as a verb. You can use Splunk as an adjective. For example, “Search your data using Splunk software.” See Splunk product terminology to choose the best product terminology in your writing.

Don't use an apostrophe to make product names, company names, or trademarked terms possessive or plural. Incorrect use can dilute the trademark or registered trademark. See the following examples:

- **Original**
  - The use of Splunk’s Search Processing Language (SPL).
- **Revision**
  - The use of the Splunk Search Processing Language (SPL).

For acceptable uses of apostrophes in your writing, see Apostrophe.

Don't add trademark attribution to third-party company or product names.
Tables

Best practices for including tables

A table is a good way to present descriptions of choices, options, and fields that a user might encounter in a task. You can also use tables for reference information, decision support, compatibility matrices, and choices a user has.

Keep tables as simple as possible, and make sure that screen readers can easily parse tables. For more information about making tables accessible in Splunk docs, see Write docs for everyone.

Here are a few guidelines for working with tables in your content:

- Introduce tables with a full sentence and a colon in your writing.
- Don’t create a table with only one row
- You can use tables in a list, but avoid using lists in a table.
- Avoid merging or splitting table cells.
- Avoid leaving table cells empty. If you need to keep a cell blank, use a non-breaking space to make a cell appear blank.
- Avoid including links in tables, unless the purpose of the table is to help users find information in the docs.
- Use code samples sparingly in tables.
Third-party information

Documenting third-party products

Generally, Splunk documentation doesn’t cover third-party software products. However, Splunk products sometimes require integration with third-party products. In these cases, users might need documentation about how to do something in a third-party product to be successful with Splunk software. Writing about or citing third-party products typically occurs in app and add-on documentation.

Evaluate the needs of your situation

If you need to document an element of a third-party product, how you proceed depends on the following factors:

The availability and accuracy of the third-party product documentation:

- Is readily available on the web?
- Is it accurate and up to date for the version of the product that your reader needs to use?
- Does it cover the content that your audience needs in order to complete the task?

Whether there are required settings or configurations in the third-party product that are specific to your product:

- Are there specific settings or configurations that your reader must handle in the third-party product to be successful with their task?
- Are those configurations obvious from the third-party documentation or does the reader more require information?

The relationship between the third-party product vendor and your organization:

- What is the relationship between your organization and the third-party product vendor?
- Do your companies have a relationship that allows you to reach out to your counterparts in their organization to come up with a solution?

The level of detail the audience needs to be successful:

- Do your readers need to be stepped through a task in the third-party product?
- Can they succeed with a list of settings they must find on their own if you state what the Splunk software requirements are for those settings?

Determine the right level of documentation for a third-party product

Use the following decision tree to determine the appropriate approach to documenting third-party product information, and refer to the following sections for additional detail about the approach described in the orange boxes.
**Option 1: Don’t do it**

Don't document a third-party product in any way if doing so isn't required for customer success.

**Option 2: Limited coverage of the required settings in a list, referring readers to the third-party product docs for further instructions**

Option 2 is best for you if the following are true:

- The third-party vendor's documentation is available and accurate.
- There are settings in the third-party product that must be configured a specific way in order to work with Splunk software.

This approach is common when customers need to integrate our software with another vendor's product. List the settings and values that specify the format that the Splunk platform expects, using the terminology of the third-party product. Don't phrase these parameters in the form of a task and don't include screenshots because both can become outdated. Allow the third-party vendor documentation to handle any detailed task, reference, or illustration. Your documentation of the specific parameters required for your use case must supplement their more comprehensive coverage of their product.

For example, consider a scenario where you're documenting the task of getting data into the Splunk platform from a third-party product. For the Splunk platform to receive the data successfully, the user needs to configure the third-party product to produce the data in a particular format. Limit references to the third-party product to the names of the settings or other configuration items must be set in a certain way, with descriptions of what the Splunk product requires. Format this information as a bulleted list or table, not as a task.

For an example, see Configure Amazon Kinesis Firehose to send data to the Splunk platform in the *Splunk Add-on for Amazon Kinesis Firehose* manual.

**Option 3: No coverage other than a reference to the third-party product documentation**

Option 3 is best for you if the following are true:

- The third-party vendor's documentation is available and accurate.
- There are no settings in the third-party product that must be configured a specific way in order to work with Splunk software.

If you're selecting this approach, it's because you need to make some reference to a third-party vendor's product, but you don't need to convey any specific instructions about that vendor's software. In this case, limit yourself to a factual statement that refers to the third-party product and instruct readers to consult the third-party documentation for more information.

Avoid linking readers to the third-party website. Instead, provide a search term that helps readers find the correct content on the third-party website, and test it to make sure your reader can successfully find the content using that term.

If the documentation is difficult to find from the vendor's home page, link to a stable URL and provide the search term that can get the reader the rest of the way. For every release, check all links and search terms for third-party websites in your documentation to make sure they still work. For more information on linking to third-party sites, see [Links to third-party websites](#).
Option 4: Collaborate with your counterparts at the third-party product vendor to come up with a solution

Option 4 is best for you if the following are true:

- The third-party vendor’s documentation is not available or accurate.
- Your organization has a close relationship with the third-party vendor that allows you to collaborate with a writer at that organization.

If you and another organization are working closely together on a product integration, you or your team might have a contact who you can collaborate with in the other organization. In some cases, you might be able to communicate the reader’s requirements from their documentation and encourage the other organization to create what is needed. In other cases, you might get a commitment from the contact to review a task in your documentation and provide any necessary updates for every release. Be conservative with your expectations. Do not create a solution that depends on the relationship staying as close as it is today.

For an example of documentation that was written with third-party vendor collaboration, see Apply the integration application in the Splunk Add-on for ServiceNow manual. The third-party vendor helped write and technically review this task and approved its inclusion in our documentation. However, the close relationship with the third-party vendor no longer exists, so the accuracy of this documentation is no longer guaranteed.

Option 5: No coverage in Splunk docs, referring readers to the third-party vendor for help

Option 5 is best for you if the following are true:

- The third-party vendor’s documentation is not available or accurate.
- Your organization’s relationship with the third-party vendor doesn’t allow for collaboration.
- There are no settings in the third-party product that must be configured a specific way in order to work with Splunk software.

If you’re selecting this approach, it’s because you need to make some reference to a third-party vendor’s product, but there’s no need to convey any specific instructions about what to do with that vendor’s software. In this case, limit yourself to a factual statement that refers to the third-party vendor’s product and instructs readers to request more information or support directly from the third-party vendor.

Option 6: Limited coverage of the required settings in a list, referring readers to the third-party vendor for help

Option 6 is best for you if the following are true:

- The third-party vendor’s documentation is not available or accurate.
- Your organization’s relationship with the third-party vendor doesn’t allow for collaboration.
- There are settings in the third-party product that must be configured a specific way in order to work with Splunk software.
- Customers don’t need to be stepped through a detailed task in order to be successful.

Using a list or table, provide coverage of the specific settings or parameters that your readers need to set in the third-party product. Because the third-party vendor doesn’t offer documentation that covers these settings, you can’t refer readers to their site with a useful search term for more information. Instead, refer customers to the third-party vendor for additional support.
Option 7: Provide a detailed task outside of Splunk docs, such as in a blog or on Splunk Answers

Option 7 is best for you if the following are true:

- The third-party vendor's documentation isn't available or accurate.
- Your organization's relationship with the third-party vendor doesn't allow for collaboration.
- There are settings in the third-party product that must be configured a specific way in order to work with Splunk software.
- Customers need to be stepped through a detailed task in order to be successful.

If customers can't be successful in any other way, you can provide detailed tasks outside of Splunk Docs sites in a timestamped location that does not imply Splunk support. For example, you can contribute a post on the Splunk blog or write a Splunk Answers post that covers the integrated task, even including screenshots of that third-party product. In the official documentation, you can link your readers to this blog or community post.
UI text guidelines

UI text style guidelines

These guidelines provide a quick reference for anyone who writes UI text at Splunk.

Much of the guidance for Splunk documentation and UI text overlaps. If you can't find the guidance you're looking for in the UI text style guidelines, use the guidance provided in other sections of the Splunk Style Guide.

Terminology and word usage

Use UI terms consistently across products and docs. See the following resources for guidance on word usage, product terminology, punctuation, and more:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Usage dictionary</td>
<td>Usage dictionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product terminology</td>
<td>Splunk product terminology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Splunk-specific terminology definitions</td>
<td>Splexicon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronyms</td>
<td>Acronyms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation</td>
<td>Punctuation and symbols</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice and tone</td>
<td>Voice and tone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Capitalization of UI text

Use the following capitalization guidelines for text in Splunk product UIs. See the Splexicon for the correct capitalization of Splunk terms. Don't use capitalization for emphasis.

**What is headline-style capitalization?**

In headline-style capitalization, capitalize the first and last words, nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and subordinating conjunctions (if, because, as, that, and so on). Don't capitalize articles (a, an, the), coordinating conjunctions (and, but, or, nor), the “to” in an infinitive, and prepositions (with, to, for, in, from).

For hyphenated words, capitalize the first element and the subsequent elements unless they are articles, prepositions, and coordinating conjunctions. The following are examples:

- Cross-Selling Opportunities
- The Command-Line Interface

**When to use headline-style capitalization**

Use headline-style capitalization for names, titles, or headings. For example, use headline style for the following elements:

- Dashboard panel titles
- Dashboard section titles
What is sentence-style capitalization?
In sentence-style capitalization, capitalize the first word and all proper nouns, such as product names or proper feature names.

When to use sentence-style capitalization
Use sentence-style capitalization for anything that reads as, or is similar to, a sentence. For example, use sentence-style capitalization for the following elements:

- Field labels
- Switch labels
- Field descriptions
- Descriptive or explanatory text
- Error messages
- Tooltips
- Banners
- Drop-down content

Terminal punctuation
When writing single, short, descriptive phrases in UI text, don't use a period at the end. If an item requires more than one phrase, write them as sentences and use a period or other appropriate punctuation to distinguish them from one another and to enhance readability. If a word or phrase is meant to be read as a question, use a question mark. Don't use exclamation marks.

If a single view, page, or dialog box contains descriptive text that uses both full sentences and fragments, try rewriting the full sentences into fragments. However, if it isn't possible to rewrite the full sentences into fragments, use terminal punctuation for all of the text.

For more punctuation guidelines, see Punctuation and symbols.

Learn more links
Use a Learn more link to link to documentation about a UI page. The format is as follows:

- Capitalize the first word only. For example: Learn more.
- Always place the Learn more link after related descriptive or explanatory text.
- Never refer to a specific doc manual in text that precedes the Learn more link.
- Don't add any text after the Learn more link.
- Don't use punctuation.
- Always follow the text with the external link icon: [ ]. This icon means that the link opens in a new tab.
- Hyperlink both the text and the icon.

Here's an example:
Tooltips

Use tooltips to identify or add a small amount of information to a UI element. Use tooltips to help users understand the meaning or purpose of icons or fields.

When writing a tooltip, use these guidelines:

- Be short and concise.
- A tooltip can vary in length from one word to a couple short sentences. Aim for fewer than 150 characters.
- If the UI element requires a more lengthy explanation, put this explanation in the documentation.
- Use sentence-style capitalization for complete sentences.
- Use present tense.
- Don’t use “please”.

The following table shows tooltip examples that are revised to provide clarity and adhere to tooltip guidelines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original tooltip</th>
<th>Rewritten tooltip</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enter a name for the model so you can refer to it later. You might include information like the name of the dataset, the field you are predicting, or the algorithm being used.</td>
<td>Enter a name for the model. Include information like the dataset name, the field you're predicting, or the algorithm being used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum time</td>
<td>Specifies the maximum amount of time that a summary-creating search can run. 1 hour ensures proper summary creation for most data models.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This view helps to get a sense of how groups with similar type of distribution are similar to each other. Do you see that the histogram of mean and standard deviations are very sharp and narrow? This means that most of the groups have similar statistical behavior, so you could consider not splitting them. Are there two distinct peaks in the histograms? That signals two obvious characteristics in your groups. It's worth investigating more.</td>
<td>View histograms for the three supported distribution types of Normal, Exponential, and GaussianKDE. Review these results for statistical behavior needing further investigation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Error or warning messages

When writing a user-facing error or warning message, focus on error recognition and recovery. Clearly state the problem, the cause, and what the customer can do to remediate or recover. Use complete sentences with end punctuation. Don't use “please”.

The following examples of error messages are revised for clarity and provide an action that the user can take:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original message</th>
<th>Rewritten message</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Max number of concurrent searches reached.</td>
<td>The maximum number of concurrent searches has been reached. Decrease the number of concurrent searches or increase search concurrency limits in limits.conf.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WARN DistributedPeerManager - Unable to distribute to peer named xxxx at uri <a href="http://xxxx:8089">http://xxxx:8089</a> because peer has status = &quot;Authentication Failed&quot;.</td>
<td>WARN DistributedPeerManager - Unable to distribute to peer named xxxx at <a href="http://xxxx:8089">http://xxxx:8089</a> because authentication failed. Make sure adequate system resources are available on the target server.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max search jobs encountered.</td>
<td>The maximum number of search jobs has been reached. To reduce the number of search jobs, go to Job Inspector and delete unneeded jobs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original message</td>
<td>Rewritten message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could not load/save the object. May need to check user settings for roles and</td>
<td>The glass table cannot be saved because it has the same name as the glass table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>permissions. Details: An internal error has occurred.</td>
<td>from which it was cloned. Change the name of the cloned glass table.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additional resources

Where to look if the Splunk Style Guide doesn't answer your question

The following resources provide information about industry standards in technical communication and writing best practices. Use these references secondarily to the Splunk Style Guide.

Style guides

The Splunk Style Guide covers issues specific to Splunk docs, but standards for grammar, spelling, and style are extensively covered in technical documentation references as well as general writing guides.

If you can't find what you're looking for in the Splunk Style Guide, refer to these reference materials:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style issue</th>
<th>Resource</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical documentation style issues</td>
<td>Google Developer Documentation Style Guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="https://developers.google.com/style">https://developers.google.com/style</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Microsoft Writing Style Guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/style-guide/welcome">https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/style-guide/welcome</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar and punctuation for nontechnical terms</td>
<td>The Chicago Manual of Style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html">http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling, definitions, and capitalization</td>
<td>Merriam-Webster Dictionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.merriam-webster.com">http://www.merriam-webster.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Writing references

The following references can enhance your writing and your understanding of best practices in technical communications:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing reference</th>
<th>Publication date</th>
<th>What’s good about it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Every Page is Page One by Mark Baker and the Every Page is Page One website</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>A resource with an accompanying blog, EPPO outlines the philosophy that the Splunk docs team subscribes to when architecting and developing information for Splunk customers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing Quality Technical Information, IBM Press</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Best practices for developing docs in regard to accuracy, clarity, completeness, concreteness, organization, retrievability, style, task orientation, and visual effectiveness.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>