Using Italics

**What is the purpose of italics?**

Italics are used primarily to denote titles and names of particular works or objects in order to allow that title or name to stand out from the surrounding sentence. Italics may also be used for emphasis in writing, but only rarely. Overuse of this option dilutes the effectiveness of the font and can distract the reader.

**Italicized type is used...**

- **To specify titles of certain creative works**
  Such works are: books, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets/booklets, plays, long poems, movies, TV shows, radio shows, musical compositions, choreographic works, works of visual art, comic strips, and software programs. Make sure you italicize the *entire* title—if there is a question mark in the title itself, then italicize it.

- **To specify certain vehicles**
  Such as ships, aircraft, spacecrafts, and trains.

- **To specify foreign words within English text**

- **To specify scientific names of plants and animals**

- **To specify words, letters, and numbers used as themselves**
  To achieve the same effect, one may also place these in quotation marks.

**Italicized type looks like...**

- • My daughter’s favorite book is *Where Have All the Flowers Gone?*

- • The Titanic sank in 1912.

- • “Do all coins say *e pluribus unum*?” she asked.

- • An *Orchis mascula* doesn’t sound as “orchid.”

- • You use the word *very* too much in this paper.
Using Italics

Do NOT italicize...

⇒ Sacred texts, books of sacred texts, or legal documents

⇒ Foreign-based words that have been integrated into the English language

Italicized type looks like...

- Esther is my favorite book of the Bible.
- Esther is my favorite book of the Bible.

- The alumni dinner begins at 6:30 PM.
- The alumni dinner begins at 6:30 PM.