FAMe Style Guidelines

Memos are easier to prepare than full articles, but they are different. Chances are that your research will get ten times as many memo readers as original paper readers, so it is well-worth putting in the effort. A memo does not need to contain everything. Interested researchers will go to your main article. Before you start, please take a look at a few sample MeMos, so that you understand the goal and guideines of the FAMe style, both in syntax and semantics.

Use this document as a checklist.

General

☐ Your final document should be between 3 and 5 pages long, with 1 to 3 key tables or figures. Ask us for exceptions when necessary.

☐ Use the exact same title in the memo that you used in your original article. Tell us your DOI (from the journal) right below your title.

☐ Do not write "in a recent paper, we do X." The reader knows that you are memo-izing your recent paper. If you want, feel free to cite your original paper again, e.g., "in Black-Scholes (JPE 1973), we do X."

☐ FAMe articles do *not* provide a bibliography list at the end. Instead, we reference the journal name together with the year of publication (e.g., JPE 1973). We separate authors with hyphens. (Do not use et.al.) Thus, a typical reference may be Black-Scholes (JPE 1973). In the e-versions, this is hyperlinked to the DOIs (the unchangeable html links) of the referenced article. For the full reference information, readers can return to your original article. (If you know the DOI on papers that you are referencing, please tell us. It saves us a search.)

☐ FAMe deliberately does not have a journal ISSN number—FAMe is a jagazine and *not* a journal that you should cite. You should only cite the original articles.

☐ We do not begin FAMe titles with the last name of the first author, but with the first name of the first author. (For some foreign names, this can be hard to guess, so please tell us.) Please use an English spelling of your name, using only the 26-character English alphabet.

☐ Use only sections. Subsections are not permitted.

☐ You should have between one and two section headings per page. Often, these should summarize the points of what you are trying to say next. Omit the "introduction" section.

☐ Use minimum referencing to sections, figures, tables, and equations. Enumerate only equations that you absolutely must reference by number from far away. Omit the numbering on other equations. For example, we prefer "the preceding equation" or "the first equation," because it is often easier on the reader. Of course, if you have 5 equations and need to refer to the third equation from somewhere far away, then you do not have a choice. Never refer to page numbers: FAMe articles do not have page numbers, only href article numbers (in increasing order, such as '#memo15').

☐ Keep the number of equations to a minimum. Seriously. If you must explain a theory, can you do it with a numerical example instead? Remember: your real paper is elsewhere. You do not need to convey the full generality in FAMe. You need to convey the intuition.

☐ There are no footnotes in FAMe. Preferably avoid them altogether. These are memos, not articles. Think first: Do you really need the footnote? Can you drop it? If not, can you place it into the main text?

☐ If you are using LaTeX and want to do some of the formatting yourself, please download our http://www.fame-jagazine.info/tex.zip example to make our job easier. Do not use fancy LaTeX macros or packages. Our LaTeX vocabulary is far more limited to facilitate the nice translation into html and epub.

☐ Title, heading, and caption capitalizations: FAMe follows the "Sentence Case" method, where you capitalize only the first word and proper nouns (i.e., names, not common nouns). This is easier to remember than the alternative "Title-case Method," where you need to capitalize major words (and where major words are often in disagreement). Sentence capitalization also applies to table headings.

☐ Use i, j, k as indices for cross-sectional indices, and t, s, r for time indices.

☐ Do not omit the leading 0 before the decimal point: use 0.85, not .85.

☐ Whenever reasonable, use $\times$ to indicate multiplication. If using LaTeX, indicate functions by extra space before the argument to the function. What is $g(x + 1)$? Is it $g \times (x + 1)$ or $g(x + 1)$?

☐ The editors will make changes to your final manuscript if they deem such changes to improve clarity. (And it is obviously possible that they will make mistakes, too. No one is flawless.)

☐ If your authors and title are too long to become an article runhead, feel free to suggest one.

Both Tables and Figures

☐ All tables and figures need a caption, preferably about 5-10 words (30-100 characters). E-readers may break longer captions in a spot that you may not like. For example, "Table 1: Explaining M&M Consumption Across Subjects"

☐ Table and figure descriptions should be reasonable. Almost all tables and figures need economic explanations of what you are doing. We do not want 5 words or 200 words of table description. (Remember that the reader can always go back to your original paper's table.) Just state the important aspects. 30 words are ideal. For example, "Our sample were UCLA undergrads. Our dependent variable are M&M's consumed. Our key independent variable of interest is height. Other unreported control variables in the regression were weight, ethnicity, and firm-fixed effects."

☐ Always include your data sample period and the number of observations in your exhibit description. Do not give an exhaustive explanation of how you constructed each variable—it's usually too much.

☐ Almost all tables and figures benefit from a one-sentence "final take-away" summary, which should appear just after the basic explanation of what your table reports. If you can, please precede this with a boldfaced **Interpretation:** , followed by your one sentence of what the reader is supposed to learn from your table. For example, "**Interpretation:** For every inch of height, subjects ate three extra M&Ms. Weight was unimportant."

☐ No left-right panels. Panels should be consecutive, instead—and preferably be separate exhibits and not separate panels in the same exhibit. If absolutely needed, to name each panel, before the table or figure begins, use a \panel macro, where the first argument is the designation (e.g., A) and the second is the caption (e.g., my panel). Better yet, change from long panels to separate exhibits instead—e-book readers are not good at breaking exhibits.

☐ Tell us (in the margins of the paper or separately) the number of the original-paper exhibit that your memo exhibit came from. This will make it easier for us and your reader to go back and check.

☐ We never *ever* set exhibits in sideways format.

Tables

☐ Keep tabular contents reasonable. Typically, this should mean no more than 6-8 data columns and no more than 10 data rows. If your regressions have many control variables, just add a line in the tabular that says "coefficients on X, Y, Z, etc., included, but not reported." Let the reader focus on the coefficient that is really important.

☐ Again, avoid using more than 6-8 columns and 10 rows (assuming each cell contains about 4 digits).

☐ Try to avoid lop-sided tables. For example, a table with 15 rows and 2 columns looks yuck.

☐ Please use two stars for (two-sided) significance at the 5% level, three stars for significance at the 1% level. If need be, use one raised 'plus' sign for significance at the 10% level.

☐ We prefer not even to display standard errors, standard errors, or p-values. Focus on your coefficients and use the stars to indicate statistical significance. Again, remember that your readers can always go back to your real articles.

☐ If you must, please report standard errors, never T-stats. **We want standard errors, not T's in all papers!** Please use stars on the coefficients for significance. (We do not care greatly if either standard errors or stars are reasonably rounded.) **We want stars on all statistically-significant coefficients, using the same two-sided significance convention. A z greater than 1.64 can get a plus, greater than 1.96 gets a double star, greater than 2.32 gets a triple star.**

☐ It should always be immediately obvious what the dependent variable in a regression is. Most of the time, it should be the caption—e.g., "Explaining M&M consumption."

☐ What are the units on your x-variable and y-variable? What are the standard deviations of the variables (not coefficient)? What is the implied economic significance of your key coefficient estimate (sd of x times coef of x, divided by sd of y)? What is the marginal explanatory power of your key variable(s)?

☐ Mention other control variables in your regression, but unless there is an important reason to include them (e.g., one control variable can explain much more of the variance of y than your own x variable), just mention with a line in the tabular that more variables are in the regression and spare us their coefficient estimates. Again, the interested reader can return to your original table. (S)he just needs to know that it's there for the taking (reading the original).

☐ Do you want to highlight one or two table cells (with boldface)? Do not use boldface for statistical-significance interpretations. Use boldface only for visual highlighting of one or two key cells.

☐ Pay attention to the number of significant digits. Most of the time, two will do. You rarely need to write 80.92 when 81 will do. Three are the most acceptable. Do not use four or more digits. For the full precision, authors can go back to your original article. (If you use more digits, we have less column width to work with.) Change the units so that we do not have coefficients with too many zeros, such as 0.00032.

☐ In tabular material, if you use our LaTeX style files, use only `\addlinespace` for vertical between-row spacing, and 'sSxX' for (progressively more) horizontal between-column spacing. You can use them liberally for visual separation (e.g., if you have three regressions, separate them visually!). We do not allow vertical bars within tabulars.

☐ Most of the time, centered instead of right-justified tabular columns look better. (They shouldn't logically, but they do!)

Figures

☐ Whenever possible, graphics should have a landscape format—that is about 3 units wide for 2 units high. Do not provide (portrait-format) graphics that are the opposite.

☐ Most of your figures will be styled to stretch most of the width of the browser and/or page, retaining the aspect ratio. Please do not stick multiple plots (graphs) into the same figure, unless absolutely necessary. Your graphs will be resized on the fly. This means that your in-figure fonts should look about the size of standard 11-14pt text when your figure is scaled to be about the width of an ordinary page.

☐ Provide all figures in high-resolution bitmap formats:

  – We need png (or gif) files that are at least 300dpi, better than 600dpi.

  – A typical figure is about 4 inches wide, meaning that it should be between about 1,200px and 2,500px. (Do not blow up a low-resolution figure to have this many pixels. We can do this ourselves. Instead, have your application create art-work that has many pixels to start with.)

  – The background should be transparent. If you cannot do this, then the background should be white. If you cannot do this, then the background should be FBF1D3. If you cannot do this, don't bother including the figure.

☐ Absolutely no jpeg's for diagrams or graphs, though. jpegs are strictly for photographs. For anything else, they are fuzzy and do not reproduce well.

☐ If you generate your figure or drawing with a command style file (e.g., pstricks, tikz, R, Stata, Matlab, SAS), then please provide us with the original source code that created your figure and the needed data.

☐ If you have a vector-pdf file of your figure created by your package (e.g., LaTeX), please provide it.

☐ If you have an .svg file of your figure created by your package (e.g., LaTeX), please provide it.

☐ We cannot run Microsoft Office. We are not interested in Excel files. We sometimes can use .csv files, which Excel can save as.

☐ Name figures by the last names of the authors, followed by a number. For example, for an article by Fischer Black and Myron Scholes, you would name the figures figbs1, then figbs2, etc.

☐ We use "fat" lines for drawings. These are usually visually better when the reader zooms out.

☐ Our main fonts are Palatino and Times-Roman. Stick to them, including in your figures, if you can. Avoid Helvetica and Arial in your figures. Do not put the figure caption (title) into the figure itself—we will typeset the figure name above your image.

☐ Please have some visual separation between the main axes labels and the axis tick labels.

☐ Text adjacent to plotted functions (or lines or bars) often helps the reader visually. We are not fond of separate legend boxes inside graphs. Because they are grouped away from the visuals anyway, we would prefer if you wrote the description in the figure description itself (e.g., the dash lines are M&M's consumed by tall people). There can be exceptions to this rule, of course. In general, text that is on the outside of the main figure itself is better typeset by us.

☐ If you do not like the resolution look of your figures, it is usually because we need better input. We just use your own figure, and they are re-rendered by a browser or by epub reader. If you graphs are simple x-y, then please send us a `.csv` file and we can just rerun it to match a standard look. For more details, please follow the format suggestion (at the end of this document).

If they are simple, we can and often prefer to regraph simple x-y figures for you. This will look good, because most other figures in the same issue are then typeset consistently. We cannot re-graph more complex graphs. If we can redo your graphs, we will take a brief look at your own sample output plot and try to mimic your choices (relative line-width or dashes).

☐ Our main graphics package is R. We use the standard R palette for colors of different y's: first black, then red, then green, then blue, then cyan, then magenta, then yellow, then gray.

☐ Only .csv data file input acceptable. Again, we cannot use excel files, but Excel will "save as" to a .csv file. Each graphics needs its own file, named in the same convention as your own sample drawings. (Do not send us multiple sheets in the same spreadsheet. We use .csv, not .xls files.)

☐ The first row of your csv file should contain the names of the variables.

☐ The first column should be the X variable. If the x-axis is time, please use yyyymmdd or yyyymm or yyyy format.

☐ The remaining columns should be the Y variables, possibly several.

☐ Do not ask us to do re-aggregation or reanalysis for you. We just want the final data that we need to graph.

Grammar

☐ We use hyphens in compound adjectives. For example, "this is the case in behavioral economics," but "this is a behavioral-economics rule." For example, "Pay one dollar!" but "There is a one-dollar gain."

☐ We use sentence-case capitalization.

☐ Footnotes follow after punctuation, not before. Of course, you shouldn't have any footnotes to begin with.

☐ Use sensible tenses. "Prospect theory will predict..." probably should be "prospect theory predicts." Note also that journals' style requests for tense are often misunderstood. They request current tense when appropriate. It makes no sense to write "in 1987, the stock market declines."

- ☐ We like but do not require first-person writing. It's up to you. Similarly, if you are one author, the royal "we" is not appropriate. Can't you just write "I"?

- ☐ Lists with more than two items should have serial commas in each one, such as one, two, and three. Yes, there should be a comma before the word "and."

- ☐ Use "since" for time. Use "because" (and not "since" or "as") for logic.

- ☐ Sentences should be reasonably short. Our jagazine is published in English, not German.

Final Corrections

- ☐ Please markup up any changes you want with pen, scan them, and send back. Or, send us an email with clear instructions of what to change. (We cannot even see Microsoft Word documents. Adobe Acrobat annotations are painful for us.)

- ☐ We plan to print and distribute several thousand copies of this issue. It's well worth your time to get your contribution to look right.