

# Good Haskell Style

All your submitted programming assignments should *emerge creatively* from the following style guidelines. Programming is...

- ...*engineering*: every field of engineering has a set of *best practices* that help in producing high-quality designs.
- ...*communication*: social conventions make it easier to communicate by allowing others to focus on the *content* rather than the *form* of your program.
- ...an *art form*: as every artist knows, constraints serve to enhance rather than quench creativity.

You may also refer to <https://github.com/tibbe/haskell-style-guide/blob/master/haskell-style.md> which goes into much more specific detail about best practices for formatting Haskell code.<sup>1</sup>

- **DO** use `camelCase` for function and variable names.
- **DO** use descriptive function names, which are as long as they need to be but no longer than they have to be. Good: `solveRemaining`. Bad: `slv`. Ugly: `solveAllTheCasesWhichWeHaven'tYetProcessed`.
- **DON'T** use tab characters. Haskell is layout-sensitive and tabs Mess Everything Up. I don't care how you feel about tabs when coding in other languages. Just trust me on this one. Note this does not mean you need to hit space a zillion times to indent each line; your Favorite Editor ought to support auto-indentation using spaces instead of tabs. That is, you can use the Tab *key* on your keyboard and have your editor automatically insert space *characters* in your document.
- **DO** try to keep every line under 80 characters. This isn't a hard and fast rule, but code that is line-wrapped by an editor looks horrible.

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<sup>1</sup>Which I *mostly* agree with.

- **DO** give every top-level function a type signature. Type signatures enhance documentation, clarify thinking, and provide nesting sites for endangered bird species. Top-level type signatures also result in better error messages. With no type signatures, type errors tend to show up far from where the real problem is; explicit type signatures help localize type errors.

Locally defined functions and constants (part of a `let` expression or `where` clause) do not need type signatures. In fact, sometimes it can actually hurt: to use local type signatures which are *polymorphic* you need to enable a certain extension and jump through some hoops (ask for details if you are curious). If you need to add a polymorphic type signature to a local function (*e.g.* to help with debugging a type error) it's usually a good idea to move it to the top level.

- **DO** precede every top-level function by a comment explaining what it does (*i.e.* describe the inputs and the output).
- **DO** use `-Wall`. Either pass `-Wall` to `ghc` on the command line, or (recommended) put

```
{-# OPTIONS_GHC -Wall #-}
```

at the top of your `.hs` file. All your submitted programs should compile with no warnings.

- **DO**, as much as possible, break up your programs into small functions that do one thing, and compose them to create more complex functions.
- **DO** try to make all your functions *total*. That is, they should give sensible results (and not crash) for every input.