Ms. Particular Presents: Etc.

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"Every writer should be on his guard against the excessive use of *etc.* Instead of finishing a thought completely, it is easy to end with an *etc.* throwing the burden of finishing the thought upon the reader...The use of *etc.* tends to become a slovenly habit..."

George P. Krapp, *A Comprehensive Guide to Good English 299* (1927)

Quoted in *Garner's Modern American Usage* (Bryan A. Garner, Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 313.

In this quotation, *etc.* is italicized to set it off from the rest of the text. In science writing, abbreviations from Latin (for example, i.e., e.g., N.B.) are not set in italics in regular text. You don't need to worry about *etc.*, however, because you're never, ever going to use it, right?

No throwaway "etc." at the end of a series—it's meaningless

It is well known that localized magnetic moments and the coupling between them are two indispensable factors to induce long-range spin ordering in solids, exhibiting ferromagnetism (FM), antiferromagnetism (AFM), ferrimagnetism, etc.

These scalar fields are all the elementary scalars that one would introduce in a complete theory (thus including the dilaton, inflaton, Higgs boson, supersymmetry partners, grand unified theory scalars, etc.).

If you want to give some examples, introduce the series with "e.g."

Both examples taken from papers published in *Physical Review Letters* in 2011.

Ms. Particular maintains that such thoughtless *et ceteras* are an abuse of readers. Why not simply tell them, "Well, there are some more examples that I could probably think of, but I really cannot be bothered for the likes of you. Figure out for yourselves what I mean."

If you want to provide some representative examples but indicate to the reader that your list is not all-inclusive, introduce the series with "for example" or "e.g." (the Latin abbreviation for "for example").