Welcome to the Editorial Style Guidelines for Montana State University Billings where you can learn more about the university’s brand and identity guidelines.

These guidelines are designed to assist the university in reaching key audiences with a consistent message and unified identity standards that allow the many parts of the university to leverage the greatest strengths of MSUB’s name and reputation. A strong connection to MSUB is the first critical step for establishing credibility with important constituencies. Individual campus units — whether a college, a department or center, or an administrative unit or student support program — gain value when connected to the university's brand.

University Relations and Communications is charged with fully integrating the delivery of the MSU Billings image, as well as to increase the effect, efficiency and consistency of institutional communications and marketing initiatives.

**Editorial Style Guidelines**

University Relations and Communications created the University Editorial Style Guidelines with the goal of providing a handy reference for points of news communication style specific to MSU Billings and the region.

The list of rules and usages we have included is not intended to be a substitute for rules of usage and spelling found in “The Chicago Manual of Style” (for non-news communications).

“The Associated Press Stylebook” is used for institutional news communications and Web sites— items that university communicators uses every day, ensuring MSU Billings titles, locations, departments, etc., are used in a consistent manner in all university communications.

**Associated Press (AP) Style**

The Associated Press (AP) style is used for all print and electronic publications at Montana State University Billings. Please reference the following style guide when editing documents for publication.
**Academic Rank/Titles**
Capitalize and spell out formal titles (professor, dean, president, chancellor, professor emeritus, chair, etc.) when they precede a name:

*EX*: Distinguished Professor of History and American Studies John Smith. John Smith, distinguished professor of history and American studies.

**Academic Degrees**
Avoid abbreviations: Matt Redinger, who has a doctorate in history.

Use an apostrophe in bachelor’s degree, a master’s degree, etc., associate degree does not use an apostrophe.

There is no apostrophe in Bachelor of Arts or Master of Sciences.

Use abbreviations such as B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. only when the need to identify many people by degree on first reference would make the preferred method cumbersome; use the abbreviations only after a full name and set the abbreviations off with commas: Kurt Toenjes, Ph.D., lectured yesterday on biology.

For degrees with three or more capital letters (MBA, BBA, MSSW, DVM), the periods are omitted. The word degree should not follow a degree abbreviation.

**Academic Departments**
Capitalize only when using an official, complete department name or when a proper noun or adjective is used. Prepositions should be lowercase in all instances.

*EX*: the Department of History, the history department; the Department of English, the English department; Montana State University Billings College of Education, the college. Do not capitalize the words: college, school, university, or department on second reference.

*EX*: admissions; admissions office; Office of Admissions and Recruitment

**Acronyms**
Avoid using abbreviations unless they are universally recognized (e.g., AIDS, NASA, IBM). If an abbreviation is not universally recognized, spell out the organization’s name on first reference. On second reference, abbreviation is used.

*EX*: Montana State University Billings, MSUB or MSU Billings
Administrative and Academic Titles

The titles Mr., Ms., Mrs. and Miss should only be used in direct quotes, letters and donor lists. Do not use these titles in running text or faculty/staff listings.

When used without a name, titles should be lowercase.

When preceding a name, titles should be uppercase; however, please note that “Professor of History” or “Professor of Any Subject” is not a title; only “Professor” is the title, unless the professor holds a named professorship, e.g., Professor Emeritus Rolf Groseth. Still, such titles are awkward when placed before a name and should usually be placed after the name.

When following a name, titles should be lowercase.

Correct: The chancellor of Montana State University Billings…
Correct: Professor John Doe, of the history department, …
Incorrect: Professor of Science, John Doe, …
Correct: John Doe, professor of history, …
Correct: John Doe, assistant professor of history….

For proper use of coach, dean, professor, president, provost, chair, trustee, board member, director and other such titles, see the Capitalization section below.

Colleges

- College of Education; the college; COE on second reference
- College of Business; the college; COE on second reference
- College of Arts and Sciences; the college; CAS
- College of Allied Health Professions; the college; CAHP
- City College at Montana State University Billings; City College, City College at MSUB

Dates and Times
Capitalize months.

When a month is used with a specific date, abbreviate only Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., and Dec. (e.g. Oct. 4 was the day of her birthday.)

When a phrase lists only a month and year, do not separate the month and the year with commas. (e.g. February 1980 was his best month.)

When a phrase refers to a month, day and year, set off the year with commas, (e.g. Aug. 20, 1964, was the day they had all been waiting for.)

Use figures except for noon and midnight.

Use a colon to separate hours from minutes (e.g. 2:30 a.m.)

4 o'clock is acceptable, but time listings with a.m. or p.m. are preferred.

**a.m., p.m.**

Lowercase, with periods. Avoid the redundant 10 a.m. this morning.

**Geography**

Spell out a state’s name when it is used without the name of a town, county, or other official area. When the name of a state is used with the name of a town, use the standard abbreviation for the state’s name (see the Associated Press Stylebook), not the two-character postal code. Do not abbreviate state names if the name is less than six characters long (e.g., Texas or Ohio).

“United States” is spelled out when used as a noun, but abbreviated to U.S. when used as an adjective. (Note that U.S. is one of the only abbreviations to use periods after each letter.) The names of other countries should be spelled out on first reference and may be abbreviated thereafter if a standard abbreviation for the country exists (such as “UK” for “United Kingdom”).

**Confusing words/usages**

advisor, adviser
Use *advisor* for admissions, academic advising, and housing materials.
Use *adviser* for all other uses. It is most important to be consistent within a single publication or family of publications.

**Affect, effect**

“Affect” is usually a verb. (Changes in weather affect his her health) “Effect” is usually a noun. (The effect of cold weather is a cold nose.) Sometimes, ‘effect’ is a verb, meaning “to bring about.” (The protesters believed that their march would effect change in the system.) Sometimes, “affect” is a noun, meaning an emotion or feeling (The man’s memory of his mother carried a strong affect in his mind.)

Ninety-nine times out of 100, if the word you use is a verb, spell it with an “a,” and if it is a noun, spell it with an "e." In these two usages, affect means to influence and effect means the result of an action - and those are by far the most common uses.

**EX:** *How will this affect my grade?*; *I don’t know what the effect will be.*

**African American (n. and adj.)**

Use AP Style for newswriting: African-American (n. and adj.)

**afterward not afterwards**

**Ages**

Use figures in all cases (the child, 3; the 3-year-old child; John Doe, 55, etc.) Also use whole numbers for all ages, never fractions.

**Alberta Bair Theater—** Use full name of first reference. “The Bair” or ABT are permissible in subsequent reference.

**alma mater**
alumni, alumnus, alumna, alumnae

Use alumnus (alumni in the plural) when referring to a man who has attended a school. Use alumna (alumnae in the plural) for similar references to a woman. Use alumni when referring to groups that include both men and women. In most informal uses, alum is an acceptable alternative. These terms can also be used for people who attended the university, but did not graduate. Avoid use of the abbreviation “alum” when possible. Never say “an alumni.”

American Indian

Where possible, use the name of the tribe.

amid not amidst

among/between

Between introduces two items, among introduces more than two.

Anticipate, expect — Do not confuse these two words. “Anticipate” means to take action in preparation for something that will happen. “Expect” means to believe that something will occur.

Anyone, any one — Note the difference: “It should not happen to anyone,” but “It could have happened to any one of them.”

Army

Capitalize when referring to U.S. forces. Use lowercase for the forces of other nations. This approach has been adopted for consistency, because many foreign nations do not use army as the proper name.

EX: the U.S. Army, the Army, Army regulations, the French army.
Asian American (n. and adj.)

Use AP style for news writing: Asian-American (n. and adj.)

associate degree

Not associate’s degree

biannual/biennial (no hyphens)

Biannual means twice a year and is a synonym for semiannual. Biennial means every two years.

Big Horn — Two words for counties in Montana and Wyoming, but one word in most other references (Bighorn National Forest, Bighorn River, Little Bighorn College).

Billings’ — Correct. Consider using instead: ‘the city’s latest development’ or the latest development in Billings.”

bimonthly (no hyphen)

Bimonthly means every other month. Semimonthly means twice a month.

biweekly (no hyphen)

Biweekly means every other week. Semiweekly means twice a week.

Buildings— Do not capitalize specific buildings (the College of Education building) unless part of a formal name (Student Union Building, SUB)
**campuswide**

Also citywide, countywide, nationwide, statewide, systemwide, worldwide, but university-wide

**capitalization**

In general, avoid unnecessary capital letters. Use a capital letter only if you can justify it by one of the principles listed here. Many words and phrases, including special cases, are listed separately in the alphabetical index. When in doubt, consult the dictionary or AP Style Book. The following should be capitalized:

- Proper nouns: a specific person, place or thing (Atlanta, Africa, Allison)
- Proper names: nouns such as party, river, street, west, college, university, etc., when they are an integral part of the full name for a person, place or thing: Democratic Party, Beartooth Mountain Range, Park Street, College of Education, Montana University System. Lowercase when they stand alone in subsequent references: the party, the mountain, the street, the college the university. Lowercase names in all plural uses: the Democratic and Republican parties, Virginia and Rimrock streets.
- Department of History; the history department; the department
- College of Education; the college
- Student Union Building; the union or the building
- fall semester; spring semester; summer sessions; spring break; final exams
- chair of the department; the department chair; director of financial aid
- Chair of the Academic Senate, the chair
- (also see academic titles, titles)
- M.A. degree, bachelor's degree, bachelor of science degree, the Bachelor of Arts in History, when used as the formal title of a degree
- (also see academic degrees)
- Montana State University Billings; the university

Centered around — it is impossible for something to center around something else. However, something can center on something else.

colleges, universities— In the first reference, use entire name. (Montana State University Billings, University of Montana, Rocky Mountain College). In subsequent references, use letter designation. (MSUB, UM, RMC). “Rocky is permissible for RMC in subsequent references. If not used in a formal title, college and university is lowercase. (The university).

composed of, comprises
It is incorrect to say "comprised of." A whole is composed of parts, and parts comprise the whole.

It is either composed of or comprises (never comprised of). Comprise means to include or contain (the whole comprises the parts). Wisconsin comprises 26 counties. Wisconsin is composed of 26 counties.

cum laude, magna cum laude, summa cum laude: Do not capitalize, unless used in a title.

Currently, now — Usually, these words are unnecessary with forms of the verb "is" as in “The College of Education is currently (or now) offering continuing education credits." “Is” means “currently."

Dean's List
All lowercase in all uses.
EX: He is on the dean's list. She is a dean's list student.
department

Unless part of complete and formal name, lowercase: department guidelines; department requirements; department chair

different from, not different than

Dormitory (or dorm)

Use residence hall.

email


emeritus (for a man), emerita (for a woman), emeriti (plural)

Professor Emeritus John Doe, not Emeritus Professor John Doe

every day (adv.); everyday (adj.)

fall; fall semester; fall 2015

Farther, further — “Farther deals with tangibles, usually distances (He walked farther than he expected). “Further deals with intangibles, such as the extension of time and degree (Carrying his argument further, he told the committee.)
federal government (lowercase)

fieldwork (one word)

first semester; first-semester courses (lowercase)

firstly

    Use first.

follow up (v.); follow-up (n. and adj.)

foreign

    For foreign countries, use other countries or countries outside the United States, etc.
    For foreign languages, try to use languages without the word foreign.
    For foreign students, use international students, students from other countries, students from outside the United States, etc.
    For foreign study, use study abroad, study in other countries, study outside the United States.

forward not forwards

fractions
Simple fractions are spelled out. When the fraction is a single quantity, use a hyphen: three-quarters of the book; four-fifths of the students.

**freshman**

Where possible use first-year student. However, the admissions and recruitment office and catalog use freshman to designate class standing. *Freshman is singular; freshmen is plural.*

**full time (adv.); full-time (adj.)**

**fundraising, fundraiser (n., v. and adj.)**

One word in all cases.

**General Education Requirements**

GER is acceptable on second reference.

**Geographical regions** — Capitalize only distinct geographical regions such as the South, the North, the West Coast and the East Coast. In Montana, distinct regions include Eastern Montana and Western Montana. For other parts of the state, lowercase. (central Montana).

**GPA**

Spell out grade point average on first reference; GPA is acceptable on second reference. UW–Madison grade point averages are based on a 4.0 scale.
grades

a grade of B; an incomplete; a grade of Incomplete

headlines

For headlines for news releases, capitalize only the first word and proper names and nouns. Lowercase the articles the, a, and an. Lowercase prepositions, regardless of length, unless they are stressed. Lowercase the conjunctions and, but, for, or, nor.

international students; students from other countries (not foreign students)

Internet

it’s, its

It’s is the contraction for it is. Its is the possessive.

lists

Use a colon to introduce a list or a series. The menu lists three kinds of dessert: pie, cake, and pudding. A colon is used after an introductory statement that contains the words as follows or following; either a colon or a period may be used after other statements introducing lists.

login, logon, logoff (noun); log in, log on, log off (verb)
long-standing (adj.)

long-term (adj.)

longtime (adj.)

Numbers

Spell out cardinal and ordinal numbers zero through nine, except for dates, times, percentages, prices, ages, years, addresses, temperatures, scores, pages, rooms, chapters, GPAs, or when the number is included in a table where space is minimal.

Correct: One, four, six, nine, first, third, eighth
Incorrect: 1, 4, 6, 9, 1st, 3rd, 8th

Cardinal and ordinal numbers greater than nine should be written as numerals.

Correct: 10, 57, 295, 11th, 55th, 61st
Incorrect: ten, fifty-seven, two hundred ninety-five, eleventh, fifty-fifth, sixty-first

Include commas in figures greater than 1,000.

Generalized numbers (such as a million, a billion, several thousand) should be spelled out.

Very large numbers should be written using a combination of numerals and denomination (e.g., 1.5 million, 2.8 billion).

Spell out the numbers one through nine; for 10 and up use Arabic numerals. For ages and percentages, always use Arabic numerals, even for numbers less than 10.

Spell out numerals that start a sentence; if the result is awkward, recast the sentence: Twenty-seven detainees were released yesterday. Yesterday, 993 fishermen entered the college.

The one exception to this rule is in a sentence that begins with a calendar year: 1938 was a turbulent year for Leon.
Use Roman numerals for wars, monarchs and Popes: World War II, King George VI, Pope John XXIII.

The figures 1, 2, 10, 101 and so on and the corresponding words - one, two, ten, one hundred one and so on - are called cardinal numbers. The terms 1st, 2nd, 10th, 101st, first, second, tenth, one hundred first and so on are called ordinal numbers.

For large numbers: use a hyphen to connect a word ending in "y" to another word: twenty-one, one hundred forty-three, seventy-six thousand five hundred eighty-seven.

Do not use commas between other separate words that are part of one number: one thousand one hundred fifty-five.

**Majors**

Do not capitalize majors, programs, specializations, or concentrations of study when they are not part of an official department name or title, but proper nouns are capitalized. (She received a bachelor’s degree in history. She majored in economics. He majored in English and French.)

**more than / over**

When something can be counted, use more than: She bought more than 20 books. In general, over refers to spatial relationships: She jumped over the chair.

**multicultural (no hyphen)**

**Native American (no hyphen in all uses)**

(also see American Indian)

**nonsexist language**
Avoid gender-specific words. Use synthetic, manufactured, artificial, not manmade. Use people or humans, not men or mankind. Use chair not chairman. Use his or her not his/her. Rewrite a sentence with plural pronouns if necessary to eliminate gender.

off campus, off-campus (adj.: off-campus housing, etc.)

on campus, on-campus (adj.)

Punctuation

**Apostrophe (')**

For plural nouns ending in s, add only an apostrophe: *the girls’ toys, states’ rights.*

For singular common nouns ending in s, add 's: *the hostess’s invitation, the witness’s answer.*

For singular proper names ending in s, use only an apostrophe: *Descartes’ theories, Billings’ schools.*

For singular proper names ending in s sounds such as x, ce, and z, use 's: *Marx’s theories, the prince’s life.*

For plurals of a single letter, add 's: *Mind your p’s and q’s, the Yellowjackets defeated the Bears.*

Do not use 's for plurals of numbers, or multiple letter combinations: *the 1980s, RBIs.*

**Colon (:)**

Capitalize the first word after a colon only if it is a proper noun or the start of a complete sentence: *He promised this: The company will make good all the losses.* But: *There were three considerations: expense, time and feasibility.*

**Comma (,)**

Do not put a comma before the conjunction in a simple series: *John, Paul, George and Ringo; red, white and blue.*

Use a comma to set off a person’s hometown and age: *Jane Doe, of Miles City, was absent. John Doe, 25, graduated yesterday.*
**Dash (—)**
Make a dash by striking the hyphen key twice. Put a space on either side of the dash: *Smith offered a plan — it was unprecedented — to raise revenues.*

**Ellipsis ( ... )** Use an ellipsis to show you’ve deleted one or more words in shortening quotes, texts and documents. In general, treat an ellipsis as a three-letter word; use three periods with one space on each side of ellipsis.

When the words before an ellipsis form a complete sentence in the original or condensed form, use a period at the end of the last word before the ellipsis. I didn’t want to teach anymore. ... Will you be there? ...

When you delete material at the end of one paragraph and the beginning of the next one, put an ellipsis in both places.

Don’t use ellipses at the beginning and end of direct quotes: "I've had enough," the vice president said. Not "... I've had enough, ..." the vice chancellor said.

**Exclamation Point ( ! )** Avoid. It is seen as amateurish. See quotation marks entry.

**Hyphen (-)**
Use a hyphen for compound adjectives before the noun: *well-known actor, full-time job, 20-year sentence.*

Do not use a hyphen when the compound modifier occurs after the verb: The actor was well known. Her job became full time. He was sentenced to 20 years.

**Parentheses**
The perceived need for parentheses is an indication that your sentence is becoming contorted. Try to rewrite the sentence, putting the incidental information in commas, dashes or in another sentence. If you do use parentheses, follow these guidelines:
- IF the material is inside a sentence, place the period outside of the parentheses.
- IF the parenthetical statement is a complete independent sentence, place the period inside the parentheses.

**Period**
Use a single space after the period at the end of a sentence.

Do not put a space between initials: *C.S. Lewis; G.K. Chesterton.*
**Quotation Marks (" ")**
IN dialogue, each person's words are placed in a separate paragraph, with quotation marks at the beginning and end of each person's speech.

Periods and commas always go within quotation marks.

Dashes, semicolons, question marks and exclamation points go within the quotation marks when they apply to the quoted material. They go outside when they apply to the whole sentence.

Use single marks for quotes within quotes: She said, "He told me, 'I love you.'"

**semicolon ( ; )** Connects two closely related ideas: The conference drew participants from across the country; two came from as far away as Nome, Alaska.

Use semicolons in a series when at least one of the items in the series includes punctuation: My children are David, 5; John, 3; and Suzanne, 1. For clarity, you may also use semicolons to separate items in a lengthy series in which no individual item includes internal punctuation.

**exclamation point ( ! )** Avoid. It is seen as amateurish. See quotation marks entry.

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**state of Montana**

**Tech Terms**
Use the spelling (and spacing) below for the following terms:
cyberspace
dot-com
e-mail (no dash)
hyperlink
Internet (Note: capitalization)
login
logon
shareware
webcast
webpage
World Wide Web (Note: capitalization)
database
DSL
recreate; re-create

These are two different words.

regents

Board of Regents on first reference; regents on second reference

registrar; registrar's office; Office of the Registrar

semester

Lowercase (fall semester, spring semester); MSU Billings is on the semester system; refer to semester rather than term.

spacing after a period

Use just one space for material that will be typeset and printed.

student classifications

Do not capitalize freshman, sophomore, junior or senior when referring to a single student. Capitalize when referring to the class as a whole or collective group. (He is a senior history major. The Senior Class sponsored the lecture). Plural of freshman is freshmen.

syllabus; syllabi

that and which
Use *that* for essential clauses; use *which* for nonessential or parenthetical clauses. General Education Requirements, which include courses in mathematics, must be satisfied. Credits that must be completed before the senior year fall into two categories.

**Titles**

*Of books, computer games, movies, operas, plays, poems, songs, television programs, lectures, speeches and works of art:*

Put quotation marks around the title.
Capitalize the first and last words of the title.
Capitalize the principal words, including all verbs and prepositions and conjunctions with more than three letters.

*Of newspapers and magazines:*

Do not place in quotation marks.
Capitalize *the* in the name if that is the way the publication prefers to be known.
Lowercase *the* before names if listing several publications, some of which use *the* as part of the name and some of which do not: *the Billings Gazette, Time Newsweek, the Washington Post, and the New York Times.*

Where location is needed but not part of the official name, use parentheses: *The Huntsville (Ala.) Times, The Toledo (Ohio) Blade.*

*Of places:*

Capitalize names of Montana regions: Eastern Montana, Western Montana.
Capitalize names of U.S. regions: *The Northeast depends on the Midwest for its food supply.*

The "Middle East" applies to Afghanistan, Cyprus, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Isreal, Kuwait, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Yemen, Sudan, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. The term is preferable to "Mideast."

*Of seasons:*

Lowercase "spring," "summer," "fall" and "winter" and derivatives such as "wintertime" unless part of a formal name: *I love Paris in the springtime; the Winter Olympics.*
**United States**
U.S. is acceptable as a noun or adjective for United States.

**Montana State University Billings**

Official name of the Montana State University System branch in Billings. DO NOT use en dash between *Montana State University* and *Billings*. Spell out for external publications or publications that will be read widely off campus on first reference. MSU Billings and MSUB is acceptable on second reference and for all references for internal communication.

**titled, not entitled**

**titles of people**

In general, titles are capitalized only when they are formal titles directly before a name: (Chancellor Jane Doe, Professor John Doe; but the chancellor, the professor). Do not confuse titles with occupation descriptions: movie star Audrey Hepburn, astronaut John Glenn. Titles that precede names and refer to more than one person with the same title are capitalized in plural form (Professors Jane Doe and John Doe).

**toward not towards**

**under way (adv.); underway (adj.)**

Almost always two words, one word when used as an adjective before a noun in a nautical sense: an underway flotilla.
University

Capitalize only as part of a formal title on first reference. Always lowercase on second reference: It was a discussion of university matters.

Abbreviations

United States
As a noun, United States: The prime minister left for the United States yesterday.

As an adjective, U.S. (no spaces): A U.S. soldier was killed in Baghdad yesterday.

As part of organization names (see the AP Stylebook under "U.S.")

States
Spell out the names of the states in text when they appear alone: Wildfires continued to rage through southern California yesterday.

Abbreviate them when they appear in conjunction with the name of a city, town, village or military base: Needham, Mass., Oxnard Air Force Base, Calif.

Do not abbreviate Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah (the two states that are not part of the contiguous United States and the states that are five letters or fewer).

When abbreviating U.S. states, do so as follows:

Alabama
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
Florida
Georgia
Illinois
Indiana
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Md. - Maryland
Mass. - Massachusetts
Mich. - Michigan
Minn. - Minnesota
Miss. - Mississippi
Mo. - Missouri
Mont. - Montana
Neb. - Nebraska
Nev. - Nevada
N.H. - New Hampshire
N.J. - New Jersey
N.M. - New Mexico
N.Y. - New York
N.C. - North Carolina
N.D. - North Dakota
Oklahoma - Oklahoma
Ore. - Oregon
Pa. - Pennsylvania
R.I. - Rhode Island
S.C. - South Carolina
S.D. - South Dakota
Tenn. - Tennessee
Vt. - Vermont
Va. - Virginia
Wash. - Washington
W. Va. - West Virginia
Wis. - Wisconsin
Wyo. - Wyoming

Place one comma between the city and the state name, and another after the state name, unless at the end of a sentence or in a dateline (e.g. She traveled from San Diego, Calif. to go to school in Kansas City, Mo. Now, she's thinking of moving to Santa Fe, N.M.)

Yellowjackets
Official team name of MSUB men's and women's athletic teams. Acceptable as a substitute for MSU Billings on second reference for teams or athletes.
Top 10 List

1. **Use a person's full name and title the first time you mention him or her in an article.** For example, write *Sarah Keller, professor of communication*, not *Prof. Keller*. Once people have been fully identified, refer to them by last name only. There are exceptions, so always check the AP stylebook.

2. **Spell out abbreviations or acronyms on first reference.** For example, use *Montana State University Billings* the first time you refer to the university in a story. You may use *MSUB* on any references made after that. Another example would be to use *COE* only after you have spelled out *College of Education* on first reference.

3. **Abbreviate months when used with days, and use numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.) not ordinal numbers (1st, 2nd, etc.).** Exceptions are March, April, May, June and July -- write them out, don't abbreviate. For example, write *Sept. 2, 2008*, not *September 2nd, 2008*. But, when using only the month and year, spell out the month.

4. **Generally, spell out the numbers zero through nine and use numerals for 10 and higher.** Note, however, that numbers used at the beginning of a sentence are spelled out. Example: *Five hundred twenty-four students attended.* It is better, however, to rewrite the sentence so that it doesn't begin with a number. Example: Attending the event were *524 students from local colleges*. Years and ages are a few of the exceptions. For example: *2008 was a bad year for investors.*

5. **But use numerals even for ages younger than 10.** This is another exception to the aforementioned number rule. When used like an adjective, say *X-year-old*, including the hyphens. Otherwise, don't use the hyphens. For example: the *5-year-old girl kicked her brother, who is 8 years old.*

6. **Spell out the word "percent" but use numerals for the actual number.** Examples: *Participation increased 5 percent. Nearly 28 percent of all students don't like algebra.* Exception: use may use the % sign in headlines.
7. **To indicate time, use figures and lowercase letters** (9 a.m., 6 p.m.). Put a space between the figure and the letters. Exceptions are noon and midnight. Do not say 12 noon or 12 midnight -- it's redundant.

8. **Capitalize formal titles used before a name.** For example, write Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Very long titles may be shortened or summarized unless they are essential to the story, but the shortened form should not be capitalized (for example, you may use spokesperson instead of Director of University Relations and Communication. Use lowercase when formal titles follow a name (e.g., Hillary Clinton, secretary of state). General titles, such as astronaut Neil Armstrong and actor Matt Damon, are lowercase.

9. **Capitalize names of people, places or things** to set them apart from a general group. These include proper nouns such as Mike, Canada, Yellowstone River, and St. John's Church. But use lowercase for common nouns (i.e. nouns not coupled with a proper name), such as the river or the church. Also, put a word in lowercase when you have more than one proper noun sharing the word. Example: Ocean and Monmouth counties. Capitalize the first word in a sentence. Refer to the dictionary or AP Stylebook, if needed. When in doubt, use lowercase.

10. **Do not use courtesy titles such as Mr., Miss, Mrs., or Ms.** except in direct quotes or where needed to distinguish between people of the same name. Using

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**recommended references**