

# ap style

## abbreviations

**Colleges** Capitalize the full name of institutions. When abbreviating the names of colleges and universities. Do not use periods: *UT, OSU, UNT.*

**Course titles** Use lowercase except for words that are proper nouns or adjectives: *physical education, English IV.*

**Days of the week** Capitalize them. Do not abbreviate, except when needed in a tabular format: *Sun, Mon, Tues.* Do not use periods. Avoid redundancies as *last Tuesday* or *next Tuesday*. The past, present or future tense for the verb indicates which Tuesday is meant: *He finished the job Tuesday. She will return Tuesday.* Use the day of the week in print copy, not *today, tonight* or *tomorrow*.

**Months** Only abbreviate names of the month when followed by a date. However, never abbreviate months with five letters or less: *Jan. 10, May 2; Thanksgiving falls on the last Thursday of November.*

**Organizations** Write out full name on first reference. Abbreviate on second reference and thereafter, without periods. Do not follow an organization's full name with an abbreviation or acronym in parentheses.

**States** Spell out U.S. states when used in the body of the story, whether standing alone or in conjunction with a city, town, village or military base. Use the two-letter Postal Service abbreviations only with full addresses, including ZIP code.

**Street Addresses** Abbreviate Ave., Blvd., St. when used with a numbered address: *23 Carpet St., Carpet Street.* All similar words are always spelled out: *Drive, Lane, Road, Terrace,* etc. Abbreviate compass points in addresses with specific street numbers (*160 E. 23 St.*). No periods are needed in quadrant abbreviations – *NW, SE.*

## numerals

In general, spell out one through nine and use figures for 10 and higher: *nine students, 10 football players, three tests, 1,200 people, ninth place, 11th place.*

Spell out numerals when they begin sentences. *Eight hundred students attended Fall Fiesta Oct. 15 in San Antonio.*

Use Roman numerals for wars and to show personal sequence for animals, people and acts of plays. *World War I, King Henry VIII, Act II.*

Use No. 1, No. 2, not *number one* or *number 1.*

**Ages** Use figures in reporting ages of people: *Timothy is 5 years old; 8-year-old Sarah.*

**Dates** Always give the date in figures, not ordinal numbers: *April 1, not April 1st.*

**Decades** Use figures to indicate a decade, an apostrophe in place of numerals omitted, and add the letter *s* to form a plural: *the 1980s, the '20s, the mid-1970s.* (Note comma direction reflects missing numbers to the left when only using two digits on years and decades.)

**Measurements** Use figures and spell out the words *inches, feet, yards,* etc. Hyphenate compound adjectives when they come directly before a noun: *She is 6 feet 4 inches tall, the 6-foot-4 woman, the rug is 9 feet by 12 feet, the 9-by-12 rug.* Exception: *two-by-four.*

**Money** Figures are used for sums of money, except for casual references. When money is in the millions, use the dollar sign, figures and decimals as necessary, spelling out the word million. Omit zeroes and decimal point when sums are even. *\$4, \$6.85, \$39.5 million, Dad, please give me a dollar. She is worth exactly \$2,431,985. She is worth \$2.4 million.*

**Percentages** Percents (one word) are always given in figures: *1 percent, 2.5 percent, 10 to 15 percent.*

**Ratios** Use figures and hyphens. The word *to* should be omitted when the numbers precede the word *ratio*: *the ration was 3-to-1, a ratio of 4-to-1, a 5-1 ration, 2-1 majority.*

**Speeds** Use figures. Avoid extensive hyphenation such as 5-mile-per-hour winds: *The posted speed was 55 mph, winds of 7 to 9, 10-knot wind.*

## other common style mistakes...

**adviser** *Not advisor.*

**affect, effect** Affect means to influence: *The break-up affected his game.* Effect, as a verb, means to cause: *He will effect many changes in the company.* Effect, as a noun, means result: is a noun and means a result. *The effect was total silence.*

**class titles** Don't capitalize freshman, sophomore, junior or senior. Use before the name on first reference. *junior Kayla Brown.*

**due to, because of** It's preferred to use *because of*

**farther, further** Farther refers to physical distance. Further refers to an extension of time or degree. *She ran farther than every before. I will look into the matter further.*

**fewer, less than** Use fewer for individual items, less for bulk or quantity: *Fewer than 10 students applied. I had less than \$50.*

**it's, its** Its is the possessive, it's is the contraction of *it is.*

**more than, over** Both are acceptable to indicate greater numerical value. *More than 2,000 students attended school the first day. Salaries went up over \$20 a week.*

**off of** The *of* is unnecessary. *He fell off the couch* not *He fell off of the couch.*

**principle, principal** A guiding rule or basic truth is a principle. Principal means someone or something first in rank, authority, importance or degree. *It's the principle of the matter. The principal is Daniel Garcia.*

**say, said** Let a person say something, rather than declare or admit or point. Avoid adding opinionated commentary like *grin, smile, frown* or *giggle.*

**that, which** Use *that* for essential clauses, important to the meaning of the sentence, and without commas. Use *which* for nonessential clauses and use commas. *The workroom, which is in H hall, needs cleaning. The workroom that is in H hall needs cleaning.*

**toward** Never towards.

**who, whom** Use *whom* when someone is the object of a verb or preposition. *Who* is the pronoun used for reference is the subject (never the object). *The woman who rented the room left the window open. Who is there? The woman to whom the room was rented left the window open. Whom do you wish to see?*

**who's, whose** *Who's* is a contraction for *who is*, *whose* is the possessive. *I don't know whose coat it is. Find out who's here.*

**composition titles** Use quotes for titles of books, movies, video games, poems, speeches, albums, songs, and works of art: "The Sweater Song," "The Road Not Taken," "The Mona Lisa," "Forrest Gump."

Names of websites, software and apps are capitalized without quotes. Do not do put band names in quotes or italics.