

Web Style Guide

Our guide contains common style issues, some exceptions to AP style, and mStoner spellings. If your question is not answered in this guide, see *Associated Press Stylebook*. For issues not covered in either guide, see the *Chicago Manual of Style* or *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*.

Punctuation

apostrophes

For plurals, use an apostrophe only to prevent confusion: CPAs, 1980s, Ph.D.s, A's and B's, the Joneses.

For possessives, use 's after nouns ending in s, unless the next word begins with s: the hostess's invitation; the hostess' seat. But use ' alone for proper names ending in s: Dickens' novels.

bullets

- Treat all items within a bulleted list consistently in terms of capitalization, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.
- Treat all bulleted lists consistently within a document.
- Don't use periods after each item in a list if the items are not complete sentences. For instance:
 - The pantry contains:
 - apples
 - bananas
 - oranges
- When a bullet point contains a complete sentence, use a period after each bullet in the list and capitalize each item.

capitalization of titles and names

- Upper case is used only when the title is directly before the name: President Bill Clinton, but John Jones, associate vice president of planning.
- Upper-case all titles when used in an address or headline
- Generally, lower-case references to proper names when not used in full: the program, the college, EXCEPT when referring to your particular institution: the College, the Foundation, etc.
 - See media outlets, below, for more information.

colon

Capitalize the first word after a colon only if it is the start of a complete sentence.

comma

- Use a comma before the last item in a series: a, b, and c.
- Use it to set off nonessential clauses and phrases.
- After a city name, use it to set off names of states, counties, and countries.
- Use it in numbers higher than 999: 1,000,000.

- **em dash (—)**

Use an em dash to indicate emphasis or explanation, to define a complementary element, or to denote a sudden break in thought. Don't put spaces around it.

- The influence of three impressionists—Monet, Sisley, and Degas—can clearly be seen in his development as a painter.

en dash (-)

Use an en dash to connect continuing or inclusive dates, times, or reference numbers. Don't put spaces around it.

10 a.m.-7:30 p.m.

May-June 1967

1968-72

hyphen

Phrases are hyphenated when used before a noun, but not after—unless the hyphen is needed to prevent confusion:

A well-known man

He was well known.

A fuel-efficient furnace

The furnace is fuel efficient.

Her reply was thought-provoking.

A word ending in -ly followed by a participle or adjective is always open:

Poorly attired man

Overbearingly arrogant person

10- to 12-page report

italics

- Use italics for titles of complete, independent works: newspapers, books, magazines, movies, plays, etc. Put quotes around titles of works that are contained within other works, such as articles.

parentheses

Try to avoid using parentheses. If you do, follow these rules:

- Put the period outside the parentheses if they don't contain a full sentence (like this).
- (Put the period inside the parentheses if they contain a full sentence, like this one.)

quotation marks

- Commas and periods always go inside quotation marks.
- The dash, semicolon, question mark, and exclamation point go inside quotation marks when they only apply to the quoted matter. They go outside when they apply to the whole sentence: Did you know that she said, "Let them eat cake"?

spacing

- Use one space, not two, between sentences and after a colon.
- Insert one line space before and after a bulleted list.
- Don't insert the line spaces before or after a bulleted list within a bulleted list.

Technology & Marketing-Related Terms

AOL

ecommerce

email

eStats

FAQ

hotlink

hyperlink is used as both a noun and a verb

HTML

interactivity

Internet

intranet

Java

listserv

login (noun—a username)

log in (verb—Use this on a clickable buttons.)

online

on-screen

Perl

readability

scalability

tagline

themeline

timeframe

timeline

UNIX

URL / URLs

In text, use regular font. To cite web sources, use bold and brackets: <www.mstonerblog.com> In general, when writing a web address (www) delete the http://. However, if the URL doesn't include www, keep the http://.

usability

web

website

webmaster

School-specific Terms

classwork

class years

There are many ways to denote class years. We generally use the outward facing apostrophe (') without commas. Mickey Mouse '23 was an top-notch student, but something of a class clown.

coursework

day care

fundraising

health care

long-term

nonprofit

not-for-profit

viewbook

Other

media outlets

Take care to confirm each outlet's exact name and formatting in the AP style guide

numbers

Use figures for 10 and above. Spell out numbers one through nine, except when used with "percent" or "million": 4 percent; 5 million. Spell out "percent" except in tables, where % is acceptable.

state names

Use AP Stylebook abbreviations for state names when following city name: The Selma, Ala., group saw the governor. Only use the two-letter postal abbreviations if the zip code is included.

telephone numbers

We recommend the fully hyphenated style: 800-444-2121

that/which

"Which" follows a comma. "That" doesn't:

The report that Marshall had tried to suppress was greeted with hilarity.

The report, which Marshall had tried to suppress, was greeted with hilarity.

titles of books, films, TV shows, and other stand-alone media or publications are italicized. (See media outlets above for exceptions.) Titles of songs, poems, TV episodes, etc. that are don't occur independently are placed in quotes. Software titles are treated as products: capped appropriately but not set off by italics or quotes.

toll-free