

Commonly used journalistic style in school publications

Abbreviations

Abbreviate titles and courtesy titles before names: *Gov. Ted Kulongoski, Dr. Jonas Salk. Mr. Crimson Tide.*

Days of the week: Spell out except when used in tabular form.

Months: Spell out those with five or fewer letters, abbreviate all others.

Spell out: association, department, detective, fort, mount, point or port: *History Department, Fort Lewis, Mount St. Helens.*

Organizations: Spell out on first reference unless commonly recognized (such as DECA, NHA, ROTC. Then abbreviate on second reference: *Oregon Journalism Education Association, then OJEA.*

Academic degrees: *Bachelor of arts degree (B.A.), bachelor of science degree (B.S.), bachelor's degree, master's degree (M.A., M.S.), doctorate (Ph.D.).* Capitalize abbreviations of college degrees, and put no space between letters: *B.A., M.S., Ph.D., LL.D.*

Ages: Use figures in reporting the ages of people and animals: *17-year-old Sarah Martin or Sarah Martin, 17. Use no hyphens with this form: Sarah Martin, who is 17 years old ...*

Advanced Placement: *AP, AP tests, Advanced Placement English IV, Pre-AP*

Capitalize:

Buildings: Capitalize the proper names of buildings and official areas within the school and city: *Room B2, Little Theatre, Ben Petrick Field.*

Classes: Capitalize official class names, but use lowercase when used to identify individuals: *junior, Junior Class, senior Kari Steinbock, Class of 2010.*

Clubs and organizations: Capitalize the names of clubs and organizations: *Speech Team, French Club, Varsity Baseball, JV Volleyball, Boys Choir. Do not capitalize when referring generically to "the varsity team"*

Committees: Capitalize official titles of school committees: *Prom Committee.*

Course titles: Capitalize only the proper name for a class: *English II, sophomore English, Geometry, Algebra II, algebra class.*

Dates: The date is always given in figures: *Nov. 4, Jan. 17.* Never use ordinal numbers (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.). The current year is not included in a date. *The game was Oct. 2.*

Months: Spell out months of five or fewer letters. Abbreviate the others: *May 17, September 4.*

Year: Dates in the current year are assumed so are never followed by the year. When referring to dates in years other than the current one, use the date and year, except when referring to classes, teams or decades: *July 4, 1776; Jan. 1, 2000, Class of '09, Disco was popular in the '70s.*

Decades: Use Arabic figures to indicate a decade, an apostrophe in place of numerals that are left out, and add the letter s to form a plural: *the 1980s, the '20s, the Roaring '20s, the mid1970s.*

Centuries: Use an ordinal figure to name a century. Capitalize the word *century* when it is preceded by ordinal figures: *2nd Century, 21st Century.*

Directions: In general, lowercase *north, south, east* and *west* when they indicate compass directions. Capitalize these words when they designate regions: *Pacific Northwest, Snow fell in the Northeast, east, south.*

Departments: Capitalize formal names of high school departments (do not abbreviate the word "department"): *English Department, Science Department, Fine Arts Department.*

Languages: Always capitalize: *Spanish, French, English, Japanese, Arabic.*

Money: Use the dollar and decimals for amounts larger than one dollar. Spell out the word *cents*, using numerals for amounts less than a dollar: *\$1.01, \$2.50, \$4, 45 cents* (not *\$.45* or *forty-five cents*).

Months: Abbreviate names of months of more than five letters *only when followed by the date.* *Jan. 10, Feb. 14, Aug. 1, Sept. 3, Oct. 31, Nov. 28, Dec. 25; Thanksgiving falls on the last Thursday of November; Feb. 2, 1987, and April 10–12, 1987.* — After using the correct form for the month, the date is always given in figures. Never use ordinal numbers (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.) with the date: *November 3, April 1.*

Names of students: Use student's full name and class on first reference and last name only in subsequent references (unless staff's style is to use first name only on second and subsequent references). When there are two students with the same first name in the same story, then use the full name on first reference and then identify them by first name subsequently. Verify the spelling of all names with the school's directory. In general, people are entitled to be known however they prefer, as long as their identities are clear.

Names of adults: For adults, use title, first and last name on first reference, and last name in subsequent references. *Yearbook adviser Chris Becerra. Principal Cherie Stroud.* **When initials are used in place of the first name,** a space should not appear between the initials: *H.L. Mencken, J.R.R. Tolkien, J.D. McIntire.* **For two persons with the same first name in a story,** use full names. Avoid duplication by using pronouns, if they are of different sexes, or by grade if they differ, or some other designation.

Numerals: In general, spell out numerals one through nine and use figures for 10 (ten) and above: *nine students; 10 football players; three tests; \$21.5 million; eight cows, 11th place.*

Spell out numerals when they begin sentences: *Twelve hundred students attended Fall Press Day Oct. 18 at Oregon State University.*

In a series where both words and figures should be used, use the simplest parallel form: *They had four 4-room houses, ten 3-room houses and twelve 10-room houses.*

Use commas in figures above 1,000: *1,980 horses; 23,528 votes; \$1,700.*

When using fractions, spell out amounts less than 1, using hyphens between the numerals: *one-third, three-eighths, five-sixteenths.*

Capitalize words when they are used with a figure: *Page 2, Room 220.*

Spell out ordinal numbers *first* through *ninth* when they indicate sequence in time or location, such as street names. Beginning with *10th*, use figures: *2125 Second Ave., 102nd and Division, second base, First Amendment, the team finished 11th.*

Organizations: The proper name of an organization is always written out on first reference, unless it is universally recognized. The title of such an organization may be abbreviated, without periods, on second reference and thereafter if it will be clearly understood by readers. (Examples: National Honor Society, then *NHS*, *Future Farmers of America*, then *FFA*. . All words in an organization's name are capitalized except the articles *a, an* and *the* and prepositions of less than five letters.

Parentheses: In general, avoid using them in a sentence. They are a clue that sentence is contorted. Rewrite the sentence another way. If a sentence must contain incidental material, surround them with em dashes instead.

Percent: One word: *45 percent (not 45 per cent, never 45%)*.

Punctuation: Follow standard English rules. Specific to journalistic style:

Comma: use no comma preceding "and" in a series: *red, white and blue*.

Ellipsis: Indicates omission of one or more words in a quotation. It includes three periods with one space on each side. (...) A fourth period is needed when the ellipsis ends a sentence.

Em-dash: use the long dash to indicate a long pause or break in thought:

She was determined to finish the marathon – no matter how long it took.

Note: a space goes on each side of the em-dash.

Hyphen: The hyphen is used when compound modifiers – two or more words – express a single concept:

fourth-quarter touchdown, better-qualified coach, full-time job, second-rate performance, up-and-coming star, 2-year-old boy.

Italics: Do not italicize titles of books, movies, plays, poems, songs, TV programs. Instead, capitalize the principal words and place quotations around the titles, except the Bible and reference works such as dictionaries.

Quotation marks: Place quotation marks outside all other punctuation:

"I can't believe it," she said.

"What was the reason for the change in policy?" he asked.

Parentheses: Avoid sentence structure requiring parentheses in journalistic writing.

Radio and TV stations: Use all capital letters. Use hyphens to separate the type of station from the basic call letters: KBPS-FM, KATU-TV.

Regions: Capitalize names of specific regions: *Pacific Northwest, Midwest, Southwest*.

Saint: Abbreviate saint in the names of saints, cities and other places: *St. Paul, St. Lawrence Seaway, Mount St. Helens*.

Seasons: Use lower case except when part of a proper name for an event: *spring, summer, fall, winter, Winter Formal, Spring Fling*.

Sports:

Athletic teams: Capitalize: *Titans, Grizzlies, Black Tornado*.

Teams: Capitalize and do not use periods when using junior varsity as a modifier, as in JV team. Otherwise, spell it out: *JV Baseball, JV Volleyball, JV Football*. Spell out and note capitalizations: *basketball team, baseball team, Varsity Soccer, JV Soccer*.

Scores: Use figures exclusively. Place a hyphen between the totals of the winning and losing teams. When reporting scores, a parallel form should be used: *It was a 5-0 victory. Spartans 10, Lions 3. Glencoe lost 4-8. South Eugene beat McNary 40-36*.

Titles: Capitalize titles preceding names, except for player positions. If the title is preceded by a qualifying word, use all lowercase: *Coach Ryan Petrick, defensive lineman Jabon Williams*.

States: Abbreviate names of states only when used after the names of cities and towns. Do not use postal abbreviations to identify states. Do not abbreviate Alaska, Hawaii or states of four or five letters (Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah). Use these abbreviations:

Ala.	Fla.	Mass.	N.C.	Pa.	Wash.
Ariz.	Ga.	Mich.	N.H.	R.I.	W. Va.

Ark.	Ill.	Minn.	N.J.	S.C.	Wis.
Calif.	Ind.	Miss.	N.M.	S.D.	Wyo.
Colo.	Kan.	Mo.	N.Y.	Tenn.	
Conn.	Ky.	Mont.	N.D.	Tex.	
Del.	La.	Neb.	Okla.	Vt.	
D.C. Md.	Nev.	Ore.	Va.		

Street addresses: Abbreviate Ave., Blvd., St. only when used with a numbered address. All similar words are always spelled out: *Drive, Lane, Road, Terrace*, etc. Abbreviate compass points (*E., N.W.*, etc.) only when used with specific street numbers. Spell out and capitalize *First* through *Ninth* when used as street names; use figures with two letters for 10th and above, i.e. *2125 Second Ave., 102nd and Division*.

Time of day: Abbreviate a.m. and p.m., using lowercase letters and periods. Eliminate unnecessary figures and redundancies. Do not use double zeroes for times on the hour: *11 p.m., 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., 3–5 p.m. 7 a.m.*, not 7:00 a.m.
10 at night, not 10 p.m. at night. Do not use the term o'clock.

Titles: Capitalize when the title precedes the name. Lowercase in all other instances. Abbreviate titles that come before a full name:
Rep. David Wu, Sen. John Kerry, the Rev. Billy Graham.

Capitalize specific titles preceding and attached to a name, but use lowercase if the title follows a name or stands by itself:

President Barach Obama; but Barach Obama, president
Principal Carol Lochner, but Carol Lochner, principal
Adviser Brenda Morton, but Brenda Morton, adviser.

Lengthy titles of more than three words should be placed after the name.
Alonzo Martinez, English department head.

Trademarks: Use the generic description unless the trademark is essential to the story:
transparent tape, not Scotch tape
soft drink, not Coca-Cola, Pepsi, etc.
photocopy, not Xerox
tissue, not Kleenex

For other style issues, consult the Associated Press Stylebook, Norm Goldstein, editor. Published by Basic Books, New York. 39th edition, June 2004.

Carla Harris, 2008