

General AP Style Guidelines

Abbreviations

- Avoid unfamiliar abbreviations – Do not use periods in them.
- If you have an urge to put the full name in parentheses after the abbreviation, it means you think people might not know the abbreviation, so don't use it.
 - No: The PBC (Parent Booster Club) will hold a meeting today.
 - Yes: The FBI released a report today saying national violent crime has dropped three percent.

Dates

- Always spell out days of the week: *No Mon., Tues.*
- Abbreviate long months as: Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept. Oct., Nov., Dec., ONLY when accompanied by a date; otherwise spell out.
 - Examples: *The meeting is Monday, Oct. 15.*
The event will be held each October.
- Use only Arabic numerals (1, 2, 10, 16, etc.) in dates, with no "th", "nd", etc.
 - No: Saturday, Jan. 15th
 - Yes: Saturday, Jan. 15
- Do not state the year if you are referring to the current year. Only use for past or future years.

Names

- Generally, don't use courtesy titles (Ms., Mr., Mrs., Miss), but it is acceptable to use for teachers/staff.
- Use last name only on second reference when writing about students or adults.
 - No: "It was easy to do," said Mary.
 - Yes: "It was easy to do," said Smith.
- Capitalize position titles *before* names; lowercase *after* names.
 - Example: Pioneer Principal Lou Young said today; Lou Young, Pioneer's principal, said today.
 - Exception: Never capitalize *teacher* as a title: *Popular science teacher Kathy Jones will retire.*

Times

- Lowercase a.m. and p.m. Use periods.
- Do not use ":00," as in 8:00 p.m.
 - The meeting will be at 8 a.m.
 - The dance ends at 11:30 p.m.

- Use *midnight* and *noon*, not 12 a.m. or 12 p.m.

Numbers

- In general, spell out one through nine; use figures for 10 and above.
 - Example: *Chuck Jones says his six classes result in about 30 hours of homework each week.*
- Use figures in reporting the ages of people
 - Examples: *Timothy is 5 years old; 8-month-old Sarah; Bob, who is 16.*

State Names

- When the name of a state stands alone in a sentence, spell it out.
- When the name of a city and state are used together, the name of the state should be abbreviated.
 - Exception: These states are ALWAYS spelled out- Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas, Utah.
- Do not use “postal” abbreviations (MI, OH, etc.). AP Style has specific abbreviations, as such:

State Abbreviations					
State	Abbreviation	State	Abbreviation	State	Abbreviation
Alabama	Ala.	Maryland	Md.	North Dakota	N.D.
Arizona	Ariz.	Massachusetts	Mass.	Oklahoma	Okla.
Arkansas	Ark.	Michigan	Mich.	Oregon	Ore.
California	Calif.	California	Minn.	Pennsylvania	Pa.
Colorado	Colo.	Mississippi	Miss.	Rhode Island	R.I.
Connecticut	Conn.	Missouri	Mo.	South Carolina	S.C.
Delaware	Del.	Montana	Mont.	South Dakota	S.D.
Florida	Fla.	Nebraska	Neb.	Tennessee	Tenn.
Georgia	Ga.	Nevada	Nev.	Vermont	Vt.
Illinois	Ill.	New Hampshire	N.H.	Virginia	Va.
Indiana	Ind.	New Jersey	N.J.	Washington	Wash.
Kansas	Kan.	New Mexico	N.M.	West Virginia	W.Va.
Kentucky	Ky.	New York	N.Y.	Wisconsin	Wis.
Louisiana	La.	North Carolina	N.C.	Wyoming	Wyo.

Money

- Use the dollar symbol and decimal system for amounts larger than one dollar: *\$1.79*, *\$9.50*.
- Omit zeroes and the decimal point when sums are whole numbers: *\$1*, *\$5*.
- Spell out the word *cents*, using numerals for amounts less than a dollar: *45 cents*, not \$.45 or forty-five cents.

Percent

- One word and always spelled out.

- No: 95 per cent or 95%.
- Yes: 95 percent.

Political parties

- Abbreviate when used incidentally or in election statistics, and capitalize: *Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., said Democrats were ready for the election.*

AP Style – Usage for High School Papers

- Capitalize athletic teams: *the Pioneers*.
 - But lowercase generic references: *The Pioneer girls' basketball team won its home opener.*
- Capitalize all words in *Pioneer High School, Community High, Huron High School*; to abbreviate use PHS with no periods.
- Capitalize awards: *Homecoming Queen*.
- Capitalize course names: *AP Latin*.
- Capitalize clubs: *the Forensics Club*.
- Capitalize departments: *The Math Department got new computers over the summer.* (Do not abbreviate department.)
- Capitalize classes, as in: *The Senior Class trip*. Lowercase when referring to a member of the class: *Mike Murphy, a senior*.
- Use ordinal numbers for grade level: *11th grader, Meg Murray; Bob Jones, who is in 9th grade*.
- Capitalize and use figures for halls/rooms: *Room C-311; the student fell down in E-Hall*.
- Use ordinal numbers for class periods: *4th hour; 1st through 5th hours; 6th period*.
- Can use first and last name or courtesy titles for teachers, but be consistent:
 - *English teacher Debra Fitzgerald* (use Fitzgerald on second reference); *English teacher Mrs. Fitzgerald* (use Fitzgerald on second reference).
- ALWAYS identify all students in stories by class level: *Sophomore Bob Smith took top honors; Mary Jones, a senior, took top honors*.
- Colleges: Use full school name on first reference, then you can abbreviate on second or future references. When abbreviating the names of colleges and universities, don't use periods: MSU, OSU