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.
  o Example: Chuck Jones says his six classes result in about 30 hours of homework each week.

• Use figures in reporting the ages of people
  o 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.
  o 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:

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<td>North Dakota</td>
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<td>N.Y.</td>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
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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.
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