



# **Strategic Communications Team**

## **Style and Grammar Guide**

Updated June 2013

This booklet is based on the Associated Press *Stylebook* (2011 ed. and online). It is intended as a guide to common style and grammar situations, not as a comprehensive list of all possible issues.

When in doubt, follow AP or a dictionary.

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

Keep the use of abbreviations and acronyms to a minimum to avoid “alphabet soup” that can confuse the reader.

Do not use an abbreviation or acronym, especially an unfamiliar one, just to save a few words of text.

Do not put a group’s abbreviation in parentheses immediately following the first mention of the group.

*The House of Delegates issued a report on dietetics education.*

Not: *The House of Delegates (HOD) issued a report on dietetics education.*

On first reference, spell out an organization’s name and use its abbreviation on second reference.

*National Institutes of Health/NIH*

*Food and Drug Administration/FDA*

*U.S. Department of Agriculture/USDA*

Extremely common abbreviations that virtually everyone recognizes do not need to be spelled out, even on first reference.

*AIDS, CNN, FBI*

No periods between letters in an abbreviation or acronym.

See also **Academy Abbreviation.**

## Academic Departments and Titles

Do not capitalize academic departments unless they are proper nouns.

*French department (or department of French)*

But: *dietetics department (or department of dietetics)*

Capitalize a professional or academic title such as president, chair, speaker or professor only when it immediately precedes the person’s name.

*Academy President Jane Smith*

*Associate Professor Mary Johnson*

Otherwise, lower-case all titles.

*Jane Smith is the president of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*

*Mary Johnson is an associate professor of nutrition*

To make it easier to read, use as few words of the person's title before his or her name as possible. Avoid constructions like:

*Associate Professor of Nutrition and Chair of the Department of  
Dietetics at the University of Illinois Mary Johnson*

Much of that information can go after the person's name and be lower-cased.

Do not capitalize casual or temporary positions.

*the meeting's chairman*

*the group's leader*

See also **Credentials**.

### **Academy Abbreviation**

Spell out the entire name of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics on any first reference.

*This includes headlines*

Use "the Academy" on second reference.

Do not use the abbreviation "AND."

Capitalize "Academy."

In spoken usage, do not use the acronym pronounced "and."

### **Academy Members**

The term "Academy members" should be used in both public and member communications when the focus is on multiple members of the Association or its entire membership.

See also **Dietetics Professional, Dietetic Technician, Registered and Registered Dietitian**.

### **Address**

The Academy's official address:

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2000  
Chicago, IL 60606-6995  
email address (optional)  
[www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)

Spell out South and Plaza in the Academy's mailing address.

All other addresses:

Contact name

Company name

Suite or apartment number  
Street number, street name, abbreviation (St., Ave., Blvd.)  
City, state, postal code

Abbreviate Street (or Avenue, Road...) when used in an address, but spell it out and capitalize it when not referring to a specific address.

The name of the street: *Michigan Avenue*.

In an address: *900 N. Michigan Ave.*

See also **State Names**.

## **African-American**

See **Ethnic Groups**.

## **Ampersand**

Use only as part of a proper title or name.

*Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo*

## **And/Or**

Avoid using except in a direct quotation. Pick one that is appropriate for the sentence.

## **Black**

See **Ethnic Groups**.

## **Breast-feeding**

Hyphenate as a verb, noun or adjective. Do not capitalize “feeding” or “fed.”

Do not use as one word unless it’s part of the name of an organization or it is spelled that way in material being quoted.

## **Bulleted Lists**

No punctuation after items in a list, except put a period after the last bullet.

*Punctuate complete sentences appropriately.*

## **Calories**

Spell out the word in text. Do not use the scientific abbreviation *kcal* except in a quote.

*a 2,000-calorie diet*

Not: *a 2,000-kcal diet*

Note: In nutrition science, *energy* often is synonymous with *calories*. Since that can be confusing to the average person – in part because concepts like

“increased energy” are usually considered good things – use the word *calories* instead of *energy* whenever possible.

See also **Science Terminology and Jargon**.

## Capitalization

In sentences, capitalize as few words as possible other than proper nouns (people, places, organizations).

In a headline or subhead, capitalize the first letters of all words in the headline, except:

- Articles (a, an, the...)
- Coordinating conjunctions (and, but, or, nor, for, so...) are lower-cased when used as conjunctions.

In the headline *Kid to Joe Jackson: Say It Ain't So*, “So” would be capitalized since it is not used as a conjunction.

- Prepositions are lower-cased except if they are part of a verb.  
*Do Performance Foods Measure Up?*  
*Academy Moves Forward*

Capitalize articles, conjunctions and prepositions if they are part of a proper name or if they are the first word of the headline.

See also **Credentials, Headlines and People and Persons**.

## Chair/Chairman/Chairperson

AP says use chairman unless specified otherwise by the group or organization.

## Commas

Use commas sparingly.

Do not use a comma prior to the last item in a list.

*The colors of the flag are red, white and blue.*

AP lists some exceptions to this general rule.

Use a comma after a dependent clause (generally includes a preposition or prepositional phrase).

*Most of the time, people should eat more vegetables.*

*In other words, nutrition is important.*

*Many people, however, don't know that.*

See AP for more detailed discussion of comma usage.

## Company Names

Spell and punctuate a company's however it does, except AP says do not spell a company name in all capitals even if that is its usual spelling (*USA Today*, not *USA TODAY*).

## Credentials

In internal (member) publications such *Eat Right Weekly* or a list of candidates, give a person's academic credentials together with his or her name on first reference.

*Elaine Anderson, MBA, RD, CDN, is the Academy's 2012-13 speaker-elect.*

In external (public) communications such as press releases, the Academy's and AP's style is to not follow names with a list of initials but instead to convey the person's credentials or expertise in words.

*"There are many ways to get more fruits and vegetables into your daily eating plan," said registered dietitian and Academy spokesperson Ann Phillips.*

Academic and professional credentials have no punctuation.

*PhD, MS, RD*

Not: *Ph.D., M.S., R.D.*

List credentials in the following order:

1. Permanent academic degrees in decreasing order: MD, PhD, MS
2. Professional credentials that must be maintained
  - a. National credentials: RD, RN
  - b. State credentials: LD, LN
3. Organizational certifications or fellowships: FADA, FASP

Don't list bachelor's or associate degrees unless they are relevant to the story.

When using a person's academic credentials in a sentence, the last credential must be followed by a comma, unless the credential comes at the end of the sentence.

*Jane Smith, MS, RD, LD, is the president elect of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.*

## Dates

Spell out complete names of days and months.

Do not write the year if the reference is to the current year.

*The registration deadline is November 26.*

*The book will be published in November.*

Use commas both before *and* after the year in a sentence.

*The application deadline of July 1, 2012, has been extended.*

*Tuesday, October 8, 2002, was a day she would never forget.*

Exception to the previous rule: Do not use commas when writing only the month and year.

*The January 2012 Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics contained an article on school children's consumption of lower-calorie flavored milk.*

Numerals stand alone in dates.

*June 23, not June 23<sup>rd</sup>*

*September 1, not September 1<sup>st</sup>*

Use words instead of punctuation marks in sentences.

*She served on the Academy's Board of Directors from 2010 to 2012.*

Not: *She served from 2010-12.*

### **Dietetic/Dietetics**

*Dietetic* is an adjective that means of or relating to diet.

*Dietetic meal*

*Dietetics* is a noun meaning the science of applying nutritional principles to the planning and preparation of foods and regulation of the diet in relation to both health and disease.

*Dietetics profession*

### **Dietetics Professional**

In general, do not use.

Our style is to use *registered dietitian*, *dietetic technician*, *registered* to describe people who hold these credentials and work in the dietetics field.

In keeping with the recommendations of the Strategy and Terminology Work Group that were adopted by the Board of Directors:

*The term dietetics professionals should be limited in all communications, internal and external, because it adds to marketplace confusion and undermines the value of CDR credentials. The term dietetics professionals should be used only as second-reference descriptor.*

See also **Academy Members, Dietetic Technician, Registered** and **Registered Dietitian**.

### **Dietetic Technician, Registered**

Use the complete credential, not just *dietetic technician*, except if it appears in a quote, job title, organization's name or other proper name.

The credential takes a comma after *technician* but not after *registered*.

*Dietetic technicians, registered make up 2 percent of the Academy's membership.*

On second reference, DTR is acceptable.

In keeping with the recommendations of the Strategy and Terminology Work Group that were adopted by the Board of Directors:

*The term dietetic technician, registered should be used when spotlighting the DTR in internal and external communications. The Dietetics Education Task Force Report and Recommendations released in February 2005 noted that by definition, "technician" refers to a person who has been trained at the technical level requiring less than a baccalaureate degree. An RD with the minimum of a baccalaureate degree is considered the professional. The DTR should be highlighted as technical support personnel. This is consistent with definitions of a technician and professional in other disciplines. That the DTR works under the supervision of the RD was approved by the Board of Directors in 2003 and was reaffirmed through acceptance of the Scope of Dietetics Practice Framework.*

## **Doctor**

Refer to someone as *doctor* or *Dr.* only if 1) the person is a medical doctor (includes dentist, veterinarian and osteopath) and 2) it is relevant to the story.

Except in a quotation, do not refer to people with PhD, EdD, DrPH or other non-medical degrees as *doctor*. If the person insists on being referred to as a doctor, use your judgment.

## **Eatright.org**

Our goal is to make it as easy and quick as possible for anyone, using any type of computer or web browser and with any level of online skills, to reach our site.

Therefore, if the name of the site is being used in any context in which we want the reader to click on the link and visit our site, use the [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org) version, which should automatically makes itself into a hyperlink.

If the name of the site is being used in the text (including prior to the Academy blurb at the end of all press releases), the first reference should use [www](http://www.eatright.org). This applies whether or not it appears in a quotation.

On subsequent references, if we're not trying to direct the reader to our site with this reference, it is OK to write Eatright.org, capitalizing the first "E."



This would be analogous to using a person's full name on first reference and last name on second reference.

### Elected Officials

The Academy's style for elected officials' titles varies slightly from AP:

- Abbreviate United States Representative in a title as U.S. Rep.
- Abbreviate United States Senator as U.S. Sen.
- Use the person's name, followed in parentheses by one letter representing the official's political party, followed by a period. Use a dash – with no spaces before or after the dash – followed by the person's state, using the abbreviations under **State Names** below.
- Then close the parentheses.  
*The sponsor of the bill, U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin (D.-Ill.), said the legislation would give millions of people access to health insurance.*

**Note:** In *Eat Right Weekly* and in other member communications as specified, do not mention the political party, in order to indicate that we work with members regardless of party.

*U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin (Ill.)*

### Email

One word, do not hyphenate.

### Etc.

Avoid using. In a list, put "and" or "or" before the last item.

### Ethnic Groups

Do not capitalize terms like *black* or *white* when writing about ethnicity except in a formal title such as a book or an organization's name.

Spell and punctuate proper names such as organizations however they do.

AP prefers *black* to *African-American*. Use *African-American* only in quotes or if that is how a person or group describes themselves.

*African-American* is always hyphenated.

AP prefers *Hispanic* to *Latino*, but says Latino "is acceptable for Hispanics who prefer that term." When possible and appropriate, use a more specific identification, such as *Cuban*, *Mexican-American* or *Puerto Rican*.

Other than *African-American*, the names of ethnic groups or locations used as nouns are *not hyphenated* if the sentence refers to a geographic location or people who come from that place:

*Latin America*, *Latin American* because there is such a place as Latin America.

But: *Japanese-American* because there is no such place as Japanese America

When used as an adjective, hyphenate all groups' names.  
*Five Asian-American organizations participated in the parade.*

### **Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo**

Use ampersands (&) not the word *and*.

Spell out *Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo* on first reference.

The abbreviation *FNCE* is acceptable on second reference in member communications but it should be avoided in writing for the public, since most people do not know what FNCE means.

*Expo* is not short for anything, such as Exposition.

### **Foodservice**

One word.

### **Headlines**

All caps in press releases.

### **Health Care/Health-care/Healthcare**

Do not use *healthcare* as one word, except in a proper name.

When used as a noun, *health care* is two words.

When used as an adjective, *health-care* takes a hyphen.

### **Healthy/Healthful/Healthfully**

*Healthy* is an adjective that means enjoying health or conducive to health. It describes a person's physical state: *I am trying to get healthy.*

*Healthful* is an adjective meaning beneficial to one's health. It describes what a person can do to become healthy: *I eat healthful foods.*

*Healthfully* is an adjective that means to act in a healthful manner: *I eat healthfully.*

**Note:** Do not use "healthy" to describe the foods you eat to become healthy (*healthy eating* or *eating healthy*).

### **He/She**

Do not use slashes, such as *he/she*, *him/her*, *his/hers*.  
Write it out: "*he or she*."

Try to avoid using *he* or *she* very often and especially avoid using it more than once in a sentence.

Do not use *s/he*.

## Hispanic

See **Ethnic Groups**.

## Hyphens

Avoid when possible, especially with nouns and verbs. Most compound nouns and verbs should be expressed either as one word or two. Check a dictionary or AP if in doubt.

*fund raiser*  
*decision maker*

Adjectival phrases (combinations of nouns, adjectives and adverbs connected to form another adjective) should be hyphenated.

*the blue-green sea*  
*the once-crowded exhibit hall*  
*the decision-making process*

Modifying phrases that begin with adverbs (adverbial phrases) do not take hyphens.

*an especially tall building*  
*scientifically correct*  
*morbidly obese*

Use a hyphen with a prefix only when:

...Not using a hyphen would make the word unclear or hard to read.

*re-evaluate, co-president*

...The prefix ends in a vowel and the next word starts with a vowel.

*multi-ethnic, pre-emptive*

...Not using a hyphen would change the meaning of the word.

*recover/re-cover, resign/re-sign*

...The next word is capitalized.

*pre-Renaissance art*

...Joining doubled prefixes.

*sub-subparagraph*

Unless the word would be unclear or hard to read (see above), do not use a hyphen with a prefix if the next word starts with a consonant.

*predetermined, postpartum*

When deciding whether to hyphenate a new or unfamiliar word containing a prefix, think of more common words that use the prefix and spell it the same way.

Spell *teleseminar* as one word, as in *television*.

Not: *tele-seminar*

Compound modifiers using the word *well* always take a hyphen.

*Registered dietitians help people improve their nutritional health and well-being.*

Note: *Well-being* is always spelled with a hyphen whether it is used as a modifier or a noun.

When alphabetizing a list that includes hyphenated last names, list the person under the letter of the first hyphenated name.

*Janet White-Green* is listed under “W.”

*Michelle Brown Silver* is listed under “S.”

Avoid hyphenating proper nouns when possible. If a hyphen must be used with a proper noun, capitalize only the first word (except in a headline, when both words are capitalized).

## **Internet**

Always capitalized.

## **Italics**

Italicize proper titles of books, newspapers, journals, magazines, movies, software, films, television programs, songs, speeches and works of art.

Articles and chapters appearing in books and periodicals are placed in quotation marks.

When a phrase that should be in italics appears in text that is already italicized, remove the italics from the phrase.

*She asked when the next issue of Food & Nutrition would be published.*

See also **Quotation Marks**.

## ***Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics***

Always italicized.

Spell out the entire name on first reference.

*Journal* is OK as an abbreviation or second reference.

Use *J Acad Nutr Diet* in a formal citation like a footnote.

Do not use *JAND*.

**Junior/Jr.**

No comma following a person's name: *Harry Connick Jr.*

The same goes for Roman numerals: *John Jones III.*

**Latino**

See **Ethnic Groups**.

**Lifelong**

One word, as in *lifelong learning*.

**Mentor/Mentee**

Our preference is not to use “mentee” to mean someone who has a mentor. But since the Academy and other organizations use it, we will see it occasionally. Don't change “mentee” when editing text written by someone outside Strategic Communications, but try not to use it in original writing.

**Miss, Mr., Mrs., Ms.**

In general, refer to people only by their last names on second and subsequent references. Do not use a courtesy title unless is relevant to the story or the reference would otherwise be unclear.

*Mrs. Roberts died in 2012 and Mr. Roberts made a \$100,000 gift to the Academy Foundation in his wife's memory.*

Use Ms. only if 1) a courtesy title is appropriate for the story and 2) the person requests being called Ms.

**Months**

Spell out full names of months in text. Appropriate abbreviations are OK in charts, graphs or similar non-text situation.

**Numbers and Numerals**

Express whole numbers zero through nine in words.

Use numerals for 10 and over.

**But** Always use numerals for the following:

Ages

Percentages

Lists of daily values or nutrition information, like recipes (4 cups)

Use commas with numbers of four digits and up.

*1,000-calorie diet*

*25,347 members*

Numbers at the beginning of a sentence are always spelled out.

*Two cups of sugar should be enough for the recipe.*

*One thousand people attended the conference.*

## **Nutrition/Nutritional**

Nutrition can be a noun or an adjective.

Used as an adjective, *nutrition* means “relating to science or professional practices of nutrition.”

*Nutrition analysis, assessment, awareness, care, knowledge, management, needs, practices, principles.*

*Nutritional* means “conveying nutrients” or “nutrient-related.”

*Nutritional adequacy, benefits, consequences, factors, impact, progress, quality, risk, value.*

## **Online**

One word.

## **Past President/Past-president**

Hyphenate as a title before a name:

*Past-president Louise Schwartz*

If used after a name, two words, no hyphen:

*Louise Schwartz, past president of the Academy*

Similarly for “past chair” and other uses.

See also **Hyphens**.

## **People and Persons**

The plural of *person* is *people*.

Do not use *persons* except in a quotation, title or formal name.

The Academy has a position statement on *Nutrition intervention in the care of persons with human immunodeficiency virus infection*.

The plural of the registered dietitians who speak to the media on behalf of the Academy is *Spokespeople*, not *Spokespersons*.

**Note:** Capitalize Spokesperson or Spokespeople when referring to the RDs who speak on behalf of the Academy.

## **Percent**

Spell out the word in text.

OK to use % in a chart or graph.

## Plural

Do not use apostrophes when making an abbreviation or acronym into a plural.

*DPGs, RDs*

A corporation, association or other organization is a singular noun.

*Thanks to Quaker Oats Co. for its sponsorship of the session (not “their”).*

The plural of *president-elect* is *presidents-elect*, not president-elects. The same goes for *chairs-elect* and similar titles.

See the dictionary for rules regarding plurals of specific words.

## Possessives

For singular nouns not ending in s, add “s” (mom’s recipe).

For singular nouns ending in s, add “s” only if the next word does not begin with an “s” (business’s goals; business’ strengths).

**Note:** The possessive form of Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is s-apostrophe (Dietetics’)

For plural nouns not ending in s, add “s” (children’s nutrition).

For plural nouns ending in “s,” add an apostrophe (teenagers’ fitness).

## Quotation Marks

Font permitting, use “curly” quotation marks, not “straight.”

*In Word, use the search and replace function. Search for quotation mark, replace with quotation mark. Same for apostrophes.*

Remember to open and close all quotations.

If a quotation that ends a paragraph is a complete sentence, do not close the quote before starting a new paragraph.

**But** If a paragraph ends with a quotation that is not a complete sentence and the next paragraph will continue the quote, close the partial quote before starting a new paragraph and open the new paragraph with a quotation mark.

## Registered Dietitian

*Dietitian* is spelled with a “t.”

Some dictionaries lists *dietician* as an accepted alternate, but the Academy (then ADA) officially adopted *dietitian* in 1930 as its preferred spelling.

Use the complete credential *registered dietitian*, not *dietitian*.

Exceptions include a proper name or job title, such as *clinical dietitian* or *Consultant Dietitians in Health Care Facilities dietetic practice group*.

On second reference, RD is acceptable.

In keeping with the recommendations of the Strategy and Terminology Work Group that were adopted by the Board of Directors:

*The term registered dietitian should be used when spotlighting the RD in press materials and public communications relating to the food, nutrition and health of both individuals and entire populations. Marketing efforts should focus on the education and experience of an RD. This prominent focus on the RD will not necessarily exclude references to members as appropriate to the communication vehicle or the message being conveyed.*

## **Science Terminology and Jargon**

Use language that is appropriate for the reading or listening audience.

Especially for a general audience, keep use of scientific terms and jargon to a minimum.

Avoid nutrition science terms like *efficacy*, *etiology*, *paradigm* or *parenteral*. Most people do not know what they mean.

If you need to use a science term, briefly explain or define any word that an average non-scientist probably would not understand.

*Her lecture focused on the etiology, or the causes and origins, of the disease.*

## **Sentence Spacing**

Sentences should have one space between the period and the first letter of the next sentence.

## **Spelling**

Use whichever spelling of a word is listed first in a commonly used dictionary.

But: Spell a person's or organization's name however they do.

## **State Names**

If it stands alone in a sentence, use the state's full name.



Use the two-letter Postal Service state abbreviations *only in a formal mailing address*.

If the state name is to be abbreviated, unless it is part of a mailing address, use the following abbreviations, with periods, in all cases. Do not leave spaces between letters or periods:

Ala.	Ariz.	Ark.	Calif.	Colo.	Conn.	D.C.	Del.
Fla.	Ga.	Ill.	Ind.	Kan.	Ky.	La.	Md.
Mass.	Mich.	Minn.	Miss.	Mo.	Mont.	Neb.	Nev.
N.C.	N.D.	N.H.	N.J.	N.M.	N.Y.	Okla.	Ore.
Pa.	R.I.	S.C.	S.D.	Tenn.	Va.	Vt.	Wash.
Wis.	W.Va.	Wyo.					

**But** The following states names are never abbreviated except in formal mailing addresses:

Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas, Utah

In other words, do not abbreviate any state name with five or fewer letters, plus Alaska and Hawaii.

If the state name (or D.C.) is used in the middle of a sentence, put commas on either side.

*Thousands of people visit the zoo in San Diego, Calif., each year.  
The average temperature in Washington, D.C., is about 65  
degrees.*

## Teams

When referring to Academy departments, capitalize Team and spell out all words, such as *and* (do not use &).

*Nutrition Services and Coverage Team*

*Research and Strategic Business Development Team*

## Telephone Numbers

Put a slash between area code and prefix and a dash between prefix and suffix. Abbreviate “extension” as “ext.” and precede it with a comma.

*800/877-1600, ext. 1234*

Do not use a 1 before the area code.

## That

Avoid overuse of “that” as a conjunction. “That” can usually be deleted with no loss of understanding and can save words as well.

*These are the books I need for the class.*

Instead of: *These are the books **that** I need for the class.*

## This

To avoid confusing the reader, do not use *this week*, *this winter* or similar time elements. Use *next week*, *last month*, *next winter*.

## Time

Put periods and no spaces between letters in a.m. and p.m. and in lower case.

Not *am*, *pm*, *AM* or *PM*.

To avoid confusion, do not use 12 a.m. or 12 p.m.

Use *midnight* and *noon*.

Put a space between the numeral and the a.m. or p.m.

*10 a.m.*, *11:15 p.m.*

At the top of the hour, do not use :00.

*6 a.m.*, *8 p.m.*

Spell out time zones, enclose in parentheses, capitalize "Time."

*The session will begin at 6 p.m. (Central Time).*

## Time Element

Help the reader understand what is happening when: Keep the subject, verb and time element as close together as possible, especially if there is more than one action taking place in the sentence. Make it plain which noun the verb refers to.

*The city council ruled Tuesday the highway billboard must come down.*

*The city council ruled the highway billboard must come down Tuesday.*

If needed to avoid implying the time is the subject of the verb, move the time element to before the verb.

*The police Tuesday caught five bank robbers.* To avoid saying  
*The police caught Tuesday.*

## Underway

One word (as of AP change April 2013).

*Registration for the workshop is now underway.*

## Verbs

Whenever possible, use verbs conveying action. Avoid the passive voice.

*We made mistakes.* Not: *Mistakes were made.*

## Web

Lower-cased.

*webinar*, *web page*

## Website

Lower-cased, one word.

*The Academy's popular website, [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org).*