

KEEPING AN EYE ON CHARACTER STYLE



CAPITALIZATION

CAPITALIZE:

- All proper nouns, months, days of the week, holidays.;
- Names of sections of the country, but not directions (the Midwest; the Maritimes; he walked west);
- Short titles when they precede the name of adults (Principal Joe Johnson);
- Full names of schools, clubs, organizations, streets, geographical areas, or companies (Washington High School; Northern Ontario Chess Club; National Honor Society; First Street; Southeastern Conference; Westinghouse).;
- Proper names of races and nationalities (American; Canadian);
- Nicknames of athletic teams (Bearcats; Bees; Huskies);
- Principal words in titles of books, plays, movies or songs, including a, an or the when it appears first in the title only (A Midsummer Night's Dream).

DO NOT CAPITALIZE:

- School subjects, except languages or specific course titles (algebra, journalism, language arts). However, you would capitalize Algebra I, Journalism III and English;
- Personal titles used without names (the president spoke);
- Street, company, club or other words unless they are part of a specific name: (The club elected officers, the Science Club met yesterday);
- Abbreviations for the time of day (a.m., p.m.);
- Seasons of the year (fall, summer);
- Academic departments, except for words derived from proper nouns (math department, English department);
- Names of classes (ninth grade, senior)

PUNCTUATION

APOSTROPHE (')

- Plural nouns not ending in s
Add ('s): the alumni's contributions; women's rights.
- Plural nouns ending in s
Add only an apostrophe: the churches' needs; the girls' toys.
- Nouns plural in form, singular in meaning
Add only an apostrophe: mathematics' rules; measles' effects.
- Singular nouns not ending in s
Add ('s): the church's needs; the girl's toys.
- Singular common nouns ending in s
Add ('s) unless the next word begins with s: the hostess's invitations; the hostess' seat.
- Singular proper names ending in s
Use only an apostrophe: Achilles' heel; Agnes' book.
- When referring to "it" as possessing something, write as its. It's is a contraction for "it is."



COMMA (,)

- Use commas to separate elements in a series, but do not put a comma before the conjunction in a simple series: The flag is red, white and blue.
- Use a comma to introduce a complete one sentence quotation within a paragraph: Wallace said, “She spent six months in Argentina and came back speaking English with a Spanish accent.” Do not use a comma at the start of an indirect or partial quote: He said the victory put him “firmly on the road to a first-ballot nomination.”
- Use a comma to separate duplicated words that otherwise would be confusing: What the problem is, is not clear.

COLON (:)

- The most frequent use of a colon is at the end of a sentence to introduce lists, tabulations, texts, etc.
- The colon often can be effective in giving emphasis. He had only one hobby: eating.
- Use the colon in such listings as time elapsed (1:31:07:02), time of day (8:30 p.m.), Biblical and legal citations (John 3:16).
- Use a colon for dialogue. Jon: Have you seen Richard’s new car? Nate: Yes, I really like the color.

HYPHEN (-)

- Hyphens are joiners. Use them to avoid ambiguity or to form a single idea from two or more adjectives: A four-letter word.
- Hyphenate the phrase e-mail.
- The nouns left hand and right hand are not hyphenated. The adjectives left-handed and right-handed are hyphenated. The nouns left-hander and right-hander are also hyphenated.

QUOTATION MARKS (“ ”)

- The period and the comma always go within the quotation marks.
- The hyphen, the semi colon, the question mark and the exclamation point are placed within the quotation marks only when they apply to the quoted matter. They are placed outside the quotation marks when they refer to the whole sentence.

NAMES AND TITLES

- Use Mr., Mrs., Miss or the proper title with names of teachers and other adults: Mrs. Carol Amos, Mr. Bob DeLorenzo.
- The first time a name appears in a story, use the full name as the person signs it. Never use a single initial. Be sure names are spelled correctly.
- The first time a name appears in a story, identify the person with his or her proper title. Short titles usually precede the name but longer titles usually follow the name. They are not capitalized unless they replace Mr., Mrs., or Miss. Mr. John Myers, superintendent of schools; Student Body President Pete Fuscaldò.
- Use the word The with Reverend, The Rev. John Adams.



FIGURES

- Always use figures for ages, dimensions, money, percentages, days of the month, degrees, hours of the day, scores, room numbers, page or chapter numbers and street numbers.
- Except for those in the preceding rule, spell out numbers up to and including nine, and use figures for numbers 10 and higher.
- For money under \$1, use figures and the word cents, for \$1 or over, use the dollar sign. Do not use zeros when they are not needed: 25 cents, \$10, \$1.50.

DATES AND TIMES

- Dates are written one way only: July 28; never July 28th, 28 July, or 28th of July.
- Do not use “on” before dates: They met Wednesday (correct); They met on Wednesday (incorrect).
- Do not use o'clock in showing time. Omit zeros in even hours: 2 p.m., not 2:00 p.m.; 3:10 p.m.; noon.

ABBREVIATIONS

- Abbreviate Jr. and Sr. following a name. Do not use a comma between the last name and Jr. or Sr.: Thomas Myers Jr.
- Use the abbreviations Ave., Blvd. and St. only with a numbered address: 3514 Locust Ave. Do not abbreviate if there is no number: Locust Avenue. All similar words — alley, drive, road, terrace — are always spelled out.
- Always use figures for an address number: 9 Morningstar Lane.
- Spell out and capitalize First through Ninth when used as street names; use figures with two letters for 10th and above: 137 Fifth St., 459 12th St.
- Spell out United States when referring to it as a noun. Use U.S. (no space) only as an adjective: The United States has troops around the world. U.S. soldiers raise the American flag for the Independence Day celebration.

MISCELLANEOUS

AFFECT/EFFECT

- Affect used as a verb means to influence. The award will affect his scholarship.
- Effect used as a verb means to cause. She will effect many changes in the organization.
- Effect used as a noun means a result. He underestimated the effect of his statement.

COMPLEMENT/COMPLIMENT

- Complement, when used as a noun or verb denotes completeness of a process or the process of supplementing something.
- Compliment is a noun or verb that denotes praise or courtesy.

ADVISER

- Adviser is spelled with an e, not an o.

REFERENCES:

Gettysburg Yearbook Experience notebook
Associated Press Stylebook
Herff Jones Discoveries