

# KNOW YOUR STYLE

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## Names and titles

- ▶ Use Mr., Mrs., Ms. 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.
- ▶ After the first time a name appears, use Mr., Mrs. or Ms. with the last name for adults. Use the last name only for students.
- ▶ 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 Ms. While Mr. John Myers, superintendent of schools, is correct, so is Student Body President Pete Fuscaldo.

## Titles: Books, movies, games, etc.

- ▶ Capitalize the main words, including prepositions of four or more letters.
- ▶ Capitalize articles — “a,” “an,” “the” only if they are the first or last word of a title.
- ▶ Italicize the names of books, magazines, albums and movies and use quotes around chapter names, song titles and titles of other components.

## Abbreviations

- ▶ Abbreviate Jr. and Sr. following a name. Do not use a comma between the last name and Jr. or Sr.: Thomas Myers Jr.
- ▶ Abbreviate long names of organizations after first use. Use no spaces or periods: NHS, FBLA, DECA, FHA.
- ▶ Use the abbreviations Ave., Blvd. and St. only with a numbered address: 3514 Locust Ave. Spell them out without a number: Locust Avenue.
- ▶ Always use numerals for an address number: 9 Morningstar Lane.
- ▶ Spell out and capitalize First through Ninth when used as street names; use numerals with two letters for 10th and above: 137 Fifth St., 459 12th St.
- ▶ Do not use signs or abbreviations for percent, distances, weights or degrees.

## Capitalize

- ▶ All proper nouns, months, days of the week and holidays.
- ▶ Names of sections of the country, but not directions: the Midwest, but he walked west.
- ▶ Short titles when they precede the names of adults: Principal Joe Johnson
- ▶ Full names of schools, clubs, organizations, streets, geographical areas or companies: North High School Chess Club, National Honor Society, First Street, Big 10 Conference.

- ▶ Proper names for races and nationalities: American, Indian.
- ▶ Mascots of athletic teams: Bearcats, Bees, Huskies.
- ▶ Main words in titles of books, plays, movies or songs, including “a,” “an” or “the” when they appear first in the title.

## Do not capitalize:

- ▶ School subjects except languages or specific course titles: algebra, journalism and language arts, but Algebra I, Journalism III and English.
- ▶ Personal titles used without names: The principal spoke.
- ▶ Street, company, club or other words unless they are part of a specific name: The Science Club met yesterday. The club elected officers.
- ▶ 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: English department, math department.
- ▶ Names of classes: ninth grade, senior.

## Dates and times:

- ▶ Dates are written one way only: July 28. Never July 28th, 28 July or the 28th of July.
- ▶ Never add the year to a date within the current year, the book is about a single year. If an event occurred in previous years or is scheduled into the future, adding the year may clarify things.

- ▶ Do not use o'clock to show time. Omit zeros when possible: 3:10 p.m., 2 p.m., noon.
- ▶ Months with five letters or more should be abbreviated when followed by a date: The schedule in December is always crazy, but Winter Break begins Dec. 17.

### Numbers:

- ▶ Always use numerals for ages, dimensions, money, percentages, days of the month, degrees, hours of the day, scores, room numbers, p. or chapter numbers and street numbers.
- ▶ Except for those in the preceding rule, spell out numbers one through nine and use numerals for numbers 10 and greater.
- ▶ For money under \$1, use numerals and the word cents; for \$1 or over, use the dollar sign. Omit zeros when possible: 25 cents, \$10, \$1.50.
- ▶ Do not begin a sentence with a numeral. Spell it out or rewrite the sentence.

### Use a semicolon:

- ▶ Between main divisions of a list: Officers are Lisa Smith, president; Chuck Wilson, vice president; and Bill Callihan, secretary.
- ▶ If you think a sentence needs a semicolon, try a period instead.

### Use a colon:

- ▶ To introduce a series after the phrase "as follows" or "the following," but not after verbs such as "are" or "include." The club elected the following officers: President Kate Ashber and Secretary...
- ▶ In time of day, but not on the hour: 3:15 p.m., but 2 p.m.

- ▶ To separate minutes from seconds in sports times: 6:17.6.

### Use a comma:

- ▶ To separate all words in a series: French, algebra, journalism and English. Do not use a comma before the "and" or "or" in a series.
- ▶ To set off appositives or nonessential phrases: Mr. Ray Smith, the journalism teacher, will be there.
- ▶ To set off nouns of address: Lisa, will you be there?
- ▶ To separate a quotation from the rest of the sentence: "I'll invite you," Mike said, "to my party."
- ▶ In numbers higher than 999, except for street numbers, telephone numbers or item numbers: 1,798 but 1305 First St.
- ▶ To connect two sentences with a coordinating conjunction (and, or, nor, so): I am not going to work today, and I do not plan to go tomorrow, either.
- ▶ After an introductory adverb or adjective clause: If you are interested, I will give you more information about yearbook camp.
- ▶ Numbers, telephone numbers or item numbers: 1,798 but 1305 First St.

### Use an apostrophe:

- ▶ To form a possessive: Lisa's book. To form a possessive of a plural word not ending in "s," add an apostrophe and "s": children's toys. To form the possessive of a plural word ending in "s," add an apostrophe after the "s": students' notebooks.

- ▶ In contractions or to show omitted letters or figures: can't, don't, '84.
- ▶ In plurals of single letters and numerals: 3's, 7's, A's, F's, but not in plurals of numbers (1980s) or multiple letter combinations (RBIs, PDFs).

### Use quotation marks:

- ▶ To show the exact words of a speaker: "That was a great game," Tracy Russ said.
- ▶ If a quotation includes several paragraphs, use quotation marks at the beginning of each paragraph and at the end of the last.
- ▶ Periods and commas are always placed within the quotation marks. Start a new paragraph each time there is a change of speaker.

### Use a dash:

- ▶ Use a hyphen with compound adjectives: 50-yard line, cherry-red dress; but he ran 50 yards, the dress was cherry red.
- ▶ Only use a hyphen within words.
- ▶ Use an en dash for duration/to replace "to:" The score was 14–7.
- ▶ Use an em dash between independent clauses: Kyle likes chai tea lattes — don't forget the Stevia — from Starbucks.
- ▶ Notice the slight difference in length between these three dashes. And don't forget, em dashes are flanked by spaces.