

Get
Certified!



Certification
Committee
www.jea.org

Staying in (AP) Style

Andrea Negri, MJE
Spring 2021



Know your standards on style:

- *JEA standards (1A: Knowledge of Curriculum and Content/Classroom)*
- *State standards (Ex: Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills – The student is expected to “use journalistic style to write copy.”)*

Why is style a big deal?

- Consistency
- Clarity



Key AP style entries to know

- Abbreviations
- Capitalization
- Commas
- Months and Days
- Numbers and Numerals
- Times
- State names
- Miscellaneous



Abbreviations

- Avoid “alphabet soup”
 - During their weekly PLC meeting, the AP teachers wrote their SLOs.
- Do not follow up a spelled-out name with the acronym in parentheses
 - Wrong: National Honor Society (NHS)
 - Right: National Honor Society. NHS on second and all subsequent references

Abbreviations

- Addresses
 - Only abbreviate Ave., Blvd., St. when used with a street number.
 - 5100 Maple St; my school is on Maple Street.
 - Other street references, such as road, should not be abbreviated.



Capitalization

- Proper nouns
- Proper names
 - science class; Anatomy and Physiology
- Composition titles
 - Primary words should be capitalized
 - The English II classes are reading “East of Eden.”
 - Composition titles go in quotation marks

Capitalization

- Titles before names
 - Principal John Smith; John Smith, the principal
 - Only formal titles should be capitalized
 - If someone has a long title, place after the name
 - Susan Doe, the assistant principal for attendance and accountability



Commas

- AP Style does not use the Oxford comma
 - (We're not trying to start a fight here. It's just how it is.)
 - Pizza, hamburgers and salad are on the menu today.



Months and Days

- Avoid today or tonight
- Days of the week are always capitalized and almost always spelled out
- Months are always capitalized
 - Spell out when using without a date
 - Boys soccer season starts in December.
 - When using a month and date, only abbreviate Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec. March, April, May, June and July are always spelled out.
 - June 1; Aug. 1



Months and Days

- Avoid today or tonight
- Days of the week are always capitalized and almost always spelled out
- Months are always capitalized
 - Spell out when using without a date
 - Boys soccer season starts in December.
 - When using a month and date, only abbreviate Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec. March, April, May, June and July are always spelled out.
 - June 1; Aug. 1



Numbers and Numerals

- Generally, spell out one through nine. Use figures for 10 and higher.
- BUT there are a lot of exceptions. Here are some notable ones

Numbers and Numerals

- Addresses
 - Address numbers are always spelled out.
 - 1 Bulldog Drive
 - Spell out First through Ninth for street names; for 10th and up, use figures
 - We walked down Fifth Avenue
 - Turn left on 16th Street



Numbers and Numerals

- Ages
 - Always use figures. No one through nine exception here.
 - Hyphenate when used as an adjective or when subbing for a noun
 - the 25-year-old; the 25-year-old woman; the woman is 25 years old
- Dates and years
 - Use figures
 - Spell out years at the beginning of a sentence. (But try to avoid this.)

Numbers and Numerals

- Dimensions
 - Use figures
 - The tallest basketball player on the team is 6-foot-1.
- Money
 - \$5; 50 cents
 - Not 5 dollars or \$.50
 - Only use cents for amounts under \$1.



Numbers and Numerals

- Grades
 - Spell out first through ninth
 - 10th, 11th, 12th grade

- Scores
 - Use figures and put winning score first
 - Bellaire won 45-7

Times

- Avoid redundancy
 - Wrong: School starts at 8:30 a.m. in the morning
- Use figures
 - Exception: noon and midnight
- a.m., p.m. (note lowercase and periods)

State names

- Spell out all states in most circumstances
 - Exceptions might include tables or referring to political parties (ex: R-Fla., D-N.Y.)
- Punctuation note: Put a comma between the city and state name. If the sentence continues after the state name, you'll need another comma.
 - Negri, who lived in Carthage, Texas, for 11 years
 - Negri was born in Austin, Texas.



Miscellaneous entries

- french fries
- doughnut
- teammate
- Washington, D.C.,
 - Use Washington if it is clearly the capital city
 - Use Washington, D.C., if necessary to distinguish from the state.
 - Do not use just D.C. unless in quotes



Miscellaneous entries

- entitled
 - Use when referring to someone having a right to something
 - He is entitled to a fair trial
 - When referring to a composition, use titled.
 - The painting, titled Mona Lisa
- driver's license
- USA; U.S.



This is by no means a comprehensive list

However, it is helpful to learn high-frequency entries like these so you don't spend time pulling out your style book every time you edit.

Save that for when you need to know if it's helter skelter or helter-skelter (it's the latter). Or if you should abbreviate square in an address. (Nope.)



AP Style is constantly changing

Do you need to purchase a new stylebook for your newsroom every year? Probably not. But keep an eye on the AP Stylebook Twitter (@APStylebook) in late April/early May for major changes in the latest edition.



Establish a local style guide

Even publications that primarily use AP Style will have house style guides that contain exceptions. Consider creating your own with your staff for high-frequency references. Is JV acceptable on all references? Can you put composition titles in italics instead of quotes? StuCo or Student Council?



What if it's not in the AP Stylebook?

Pull out the Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary for anything you can't find in the stylebook.



Getting answers

- **contact me: negriam@mac.com**
- **Certification chair Amy Sorrell:
certification@jea.org**
- **JEA web site –
<http://jea.org/wp/certification/>**