

AP Style Guide Cheat Sheet

1. **Punctuation** like periods and commas go inside the quotation marks. Quotes within a quote are shown with single quote marks. Use commas to separate words in a series, but not before the "and."

"No truer words about education were spoken than by Nelson Mandela when he said 'Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world,'" explained the principal to the students, teachers **and** parents.

2. **Numbers** one through nine should be spelled out. Use figures for 10 and above.

> If a number begins a sentence, spell it out.

- **Forty** students joined the program. The room could barely hold **40** students.

> **Always use figures for ages** (She is 5 years old.),

percentages (4 percent to 12 percent), **time** (6 p.m., 9:30 a.m.), **street numbers** (1 Boot Road) and **days of the month** (Jan. 1, 2013, NOT 1st).

> **Money:** Use the dollar sign (\$3, \$30, \$30,000). Use exact figures up to \$1 million. On figures more than \$1 million, use decimals (\$3.5 million, \$3.85 billion).

AP Style Guide Cheat Sheet

3. To Abbreviate or Not to Abbreviate

- > **Addresses:** Abbreviate Avenue (Ave.), Boulevard (Blvd.) and Street (St.) only with an exact numbered address. Always spell out Road and Lane.
- > **Organizations on first reference:** Spell out the full name on first reference, and abbreviate on second reference.
- > **Never abbreviate:** Percents (25 percent), days of the week, weights (25 pounds), degrees (25 degrees).

4. Dates and Times

- > **Months:** Abbreviate months with six or more letters if used with a specific date. Spell out the name of months with five or fewer letters (March through July) and whenever a month is used without a specific date. Use the day of the week whenever possible (and never abbreviate it).
 - Jan. 1, Oct. 10, two days in February and July 4
- > **Time:** Do not use o'clock to indicate time. Spell out noon and midnight, instead of writing 12 a.m. or 12 p.m.
 - The program begins at 8 a.m. and ends at noon.
 - Students can tour the school from 6:30 p.m. until 9:15 p.m.

AP Style Guide Cheat Sheet

5. Titles and Capitalization

- > Unless you are *The New York Times*, don't use courtesy titles like Mr., Mrs., Ms. and Miss.
- > On first reference, use a person's full name. On second reference, use only the last name.
 - **Dr. Joseph O'Brien**, executive director of the Chester County Intermediate Unit (CCIU), extolled the benefits of career and technical education at the ceremony. "This is not your father or your mother's vocational school, this is the future of education," **O'Brien** said. (NOT **Mr.** O'Brien)
- > Nearly all formal titles are **capitalized before** the name and **lowercased after** the name. When the title stands alone, do not capitalize it.
 - **Superintendent** Larry Brown will retire in July. The ceremony will begin when the **superintendent** arrives.
- > **Capitalize** the first word of any title and all words that are four letters or longer. Do not capitalize "a," "an," and "the" or conjunctions and prepositions, unless they are four letters or longer.

AP Style Guide Cheat Sheet

> **Do not capitalize** abbreviations for the time of day (a.m. and p.m.) or words like state, county, or high school unless that are part of a full titles: **state** competition, Technical College **High School**, **high school** student, Chester **County**, **county** government.

6. Miscellaneous

> **Beware the homonym**

- **Their** ideas were solid.

There was an idea in her head.

They're full of ideas.

- **It's** a far cry from finished.

Its paint was chipping.

- Can **two** students volunteer?

Is this **too** much pressure?

Where can I catch the bus **to** school?

> **Hyphenation**: When two or more adjectives express a single concept, use hyphens to link all the words in the compound. Don't use a hyphen when the compound modifier occurs after the verb.

AP Style Guide Cheat Sheet

- The *40-year-old* company funded the *full-time* project.
- > *Use a single space* after the period at a sentence's end.
- > *Collective nouns* like team, school board, union, committee and group take singular verbs, like "is," and the pronoun "it" instead of "are" and "they."