

Style Guide

The University of Idaho generally follows The Associate Press Stylebook (aka AP style guide). The supplemental guide is for common uses within university writing and includes university-specific instances, which may overrule AP. Included in this guide are also sections on abbreviations and acronyms, capitalization and punctuation. In other instances which this guide or AP fails to address, refer to Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary.

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Administration Lawn

Spell out on first reference. On second reference Admin Lawn (without a period on Admin) is acceptable.

Academic degrees

Spell out the full degree name on first reference. Second reference is bachelor's degree. Do not use apostrophe when spelling out full degree. If mention of degrees is necessary to establish someone's credentials, the preferred form is to avoid an abbreviation and use instead a phrase such as: John Jones, who has a doctorate in psychology. Also refer to majors/capitalization

- Bachelor of Science in architecture
- bachelor's degree in communications
 - Use an apostrophe in bachelor's degree, a master's, etc., but there is no possessive in Bachelor of Arts or Master of Science.
 - Also: an associate degree (no possessive).
 - Use such abbreviations as B.A., M.A., LL.D. and Ph.D. only when the need to identify many individuals by degree on first reference would make the preferred form cumbersome. Use these abbreviations only after a full name — never after just a last name.
 - When used after a name, an academic degree abbreviation is set off by commas: John Snow, Ph.D., spoke.
 - Do not precede a name with a courtesy title for an academic degree and follow it with the abbreviation for the degree in the same reference.
- Reserve the use of Dr. for medical degrees only.
- Do not use Ed.S. and Ed.D. abbreviations. Instead use Educational Specialist Degree and Doctor of Education.

ACT – ACT

is no longer an acronym, but is the full and proper name of what used to be called American College Testing. Use ACT when referring to the test.

Affect/effect

Affect as a verb means to influence. Avoid affect as a noun unless it is being used within a psychology context.

- The next game will affect the standings.

Effect as a noun means result. Avoid its use as a verb.

- The effect was overwhelming.

African-American

The preferred term is black. If a person uses it in a quote, you may use the term, but hyphenate only when it is used as a modifier.

- Black students protested in the 1960s.
- "I am proud of my African-American heritage," said the speaker.
- "I am proud to be an African American," said the speaker.

Afterward/backward/forward/toward

Do not use an s.

Age

Always use a figure. Hyphenate as a modifier.

- The student turned 21.
- The 6-year-old boy played with blocks.
- The pupil was 7 years old.

Alumna, alumnus, alumnae, alumni

The forms shown are the feminine, masculine, feminine plural and masculine plural. When referring to both genders use alumni. Do not shorten to alum.

- He is an alumnus of the University of Idaho.
- She is an alumna of the University of Idaho.
- The sisters are alumnae of the University of Idaho.
- The University of Idaho is appreciative of its alumni.

a.m./p.m.

Use figures except for noon and midnight. Use a colon to separate hours from minutes. Use a.m. and p.m. lowercase with periods. When identifying a time span use an en dash (a short dash) when both times are same (a.m. or p.m.) and to when different. In general, avoid using o'clock.

- Noon is preferred to 12 p.m.
- Midnight is preferred to 12 a.m.
- Avoid redundancies such as 6 a.m. this morning or 5 p.m. tonight. Simply write today.
- The meeting is at 3:30 p.m.
- The class runs from 9-11 a.m. but The class runs from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Assure, ensure, insure

Assure is to give confidence. Ensure is to make certain. Insure is to provide insurance.

- The professor will ensure enough books are available to students.
- The student assured her mother that she was studying hard on weekends.
- Insuring your car can help cover the cost of an accident.

ASUI-Kibbie Activity Dome

Use the full name on first reference. On second reference Kibbie Dome is acceptable.

Author or research

Resist the temptation to use these words as verbs. Instead: Write/wrote.

- He was the author of the paper.
- She conducted the research.

Book titles

Put titles of creative works such as books, plays, poems, TV shows, songs, movies in quotation marks. Do not use italics. Do not use italics or quotes for magazines or other reference works such as newspapers, dictionaries, handbooks or software.

- Barry Manilow sings the song "Mandy," and he wrote songs and starred in the movie "Copacabana." He also wrote his autobiographical book "Sweet Life: Adventures on the Way to Paradise." The New York Times and The New Yorker reviewed the book positively.

Do not use italics or quotes for the Bible.

- Capitalize, without quotation marks, when referring to the Scriptures in the Old Testament or the New Testament. Lowercase biblical in all uses.

Building names

When referring to the official name of the building, use capitalization. When using the generic name, don't capitalize. Avoid using abbreviations.

- I will meet you at the Student Union Building; The class is being held in Malcolm M. Renfrew Hall.
- I'll meet you at the student union; The class is being held in the chemistry building.

Campuswide

One word. No hyphen.

Capitol/Capital

Capitol is the building in which a state legislative body meets. A capital is the city where the seat of a government is located. When used in a financial sense, capital describes money, equipment or property used in a business or corporation. Also use for a capital letter.

Centuries and decades

Spell out numbers less than 10 and use numerals for 10 and higher. Do not capitalize unless part of a proper name.

- The first century
- The 21st century

In using spans of decades use an s

- 1930s or '90s

Coed

No hyphen

Colleges

Use all caps when using the acronym for colleges on campus

- CALS (College of Agricultural and Life Science)
- CNR (College of Natural Resources)
- CBE (College of Business and Economics)
- COE (College of Education)
- COE (College of Engineering)
- COS (College of Science)
- COGS (College of Graduate Studies)
- CAA (College of Art and Architecture)
- CLASS (College of Letters, Arts and Social Sciences)

Commencement Day

Capitalize as formal name of event. Commencement alone is lowercased. Commencement is preferred over graduation when referring to the event.

Compose/comprise

Compose means to create or put together. Comprise means to contain, to include all or embrace. Do not use "of" with comprise.

- The salad is composed of lettuce radishes and carrots.
- The zoo comprises many animals.
- The zoo is composed of many animals.

Composition titles

Put titles of creative works such as books, plays, poems, TV shows, songs, movies in quotation marks. Do not use italics. Do not use italics or quotes for magazines or other reference works such as newspapers, dictionaries, handbooks or software.

- Barry Manilow sings the song "Mandy," and he wrote songs and starred in the movie "Copacabana." He also wrote his autobiographical book "Sweet Life: Adventures on the Way to Paradise." The New York Times and The New Yorker reviewed the book positively.

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Course work

Two words

Criteria

The plural form of criterion.

- The criterion is acceptable.
- The criteria are acceptable.

Curriculum vitae, vita

In nonacademic writing spell out on first reference; vita is acceptable on second reference. Do not use CV in nonacademic writing.

Data

The plural form of datum. Do not use the plural form when the singular is required. When the subject is plural, the verb must be plural.

- The data are (not the data is) incomplete.

Dates

Spell out all months when they stand alone or with a year.

- January or February 2012

When using a month with a date, do not abbreviate March, April, May, June or July. However, abbreviate the following: (*Note only use cardinal numbers not ordinals – Jan. 7 not Jan. 7th)

- January to Jan. 12
- February to Feb. 12
- August to Aug. 12
- September to Sept. 12
- October to Oct. 12
- November to Nov. 12
- December to Dec. 12

When using month, date and year, a comma always follows the year

- On Dec. 31, 2012, we will be getting ready to celebrate the new year.

Spell out days of the week in text.

Dean

Only capitalize before a name when used as a title. Do not capitalize when used as a description or after a name.

- Dean John Doe, but...
- Jane Doe, dean
- The new dean, Mickey Mouse, has a degree in tomfoolery.

Department

Use lowercase except for words that are proper nouns or adjectives: the department of history, the history department, the department of English, the English department, or when department is the official and formal name: University of Idaho Department of Theatre Arts.

Doctor

Refer to someone as doctor only when he or she holds a medical degree.

Dormitory or dorm

Instead use residence hall.

Ed.S. and Ed.D.

Do not use these abbreviations. Instead use Educational Specialist Degree and Doctor of Education.

Election Day

Capitalize when referring to the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

Electronic aka e-

Hyphenate, as in e-book, e-business. However, email is not hyphenated.

Email

No hyphen and lowercase.

Emerita, emeritus, emeritae, emeriti

The forms shown are feminine, masculine, feminine plural and masculine plural. When referring to both genders use emeriti.

- Capitalize when used as a title before a name or as an official part of a named professorship. Note that these are honorary designations and do not simply mean retired.

Kibbie Dome

Use the full name ASUI-Kibbie Activity Center on first reference. On second reference Kibbie Dome is acceptable.

Faculty

A singular collective noun. Add the word "members" to make it plural.

- John joined the faculty.
- All the faculty members agreed.
- Jane was the only faculty member who disagreed.

FAQ

Never spell out this abbreviation for frequently asked questions.

Fewer than/Less than

Use fewer than for individual items and less than for bulk or quantity. Also see more than/over

- Fewer than 10 applicants called the registrar.
- The student had less than the \$50 needed for an application.
- The cashier had fewer than 40 \$1 bills.

Fieldwork

One word

First-come, first-served

Not first-come, first-serve

Firsthand

One word as adjective and adverb

Flier vs flyer

Flier is the term for an aviator or handbill. Flyer is the name of trains and buses.

- The flier was passed out at the college fair.
- The Western Flyer has a route from Missoula to Seattle.

Fractions

Spell out amounts less than one using hyphens between the words: two-thirds, four-fifths, etc. Use figures for precise amounts larger than 1, converting to decimals whenever practical. When using mixed numbers, use 1 1/2, 2 5/8, with a full space between the whole number and the fraction.

- One-fifth of all freshmen take introductory writing.
- His books for the semester weighed 1.5 times as much as him.
- The recipe calls for 6 1/2 cups of sugar

Fundraising/fundraiser

One word in all cases

GPA

Acceptable in all references for grade-point average.

Half-hour

Hyphenated

Halfway

Always one word

Hispanic

A person from or whose ancestors were from a Spanish-speaking land or culture. Latino and Latina are sometimes preferred. Use the person's preference. Whenever possible, use specific identifiers such as Cuban, Puerto Rican, Mexican or Mexican-American.

Internet

Lowercase.

Kick off, kickoff, kick-off

Kick off is the verb, kickoff the noun, and kick-off the adjective.

Land grant/land-grant

Hyphenate the term when it is used a modifier.

- The University of Idaho is a land-grant institution.

Less than/Fewer than

Use fewer than for individual items and less than for bulk or quantity.

- Fewer than 10 applicants called the registrar.
- The student had less than the \$50 needed for an application.
- The cashier had fewer than 40 \$1 bills.

Less than/Under

Under refers to a spatial relationship. Less than is for numerals.

- The cat hid under the table.
- It's hard to be a crazy cat lady in an apartment less than 500 square feet.

Login/logon/logoff

Use for nouns. For verbs, use two words.

- The login changes every 30 days.
- I log in to my email every day.

Long term/long-term

Hyphenate when used as a modifier

- He will win in the long term.
- He has a long-term assignment.

Long time/longtime

One word when used as a modifier

- They have known each other a long time
- They are longtime friends

Nationalities

Capitalize the proper names of nationalities, peoples, races, tribes, etc. However, use only when relevant to the story. When identifying someone by race or nationality, be sensitive to the person's preference and standard accepted phrases. (For example, do not use Oriental for people who are Asian.) Also see Hispanic and Native American.

Native American

Acceptable for those tribal members who live in the U.S. Also acceptable to use American Indian. Be precise as possible and use the name of tribe. Lowercase the word tribe. Use Indian only for people from India.

Major

Lowercase in all instances, unless it is a proper noun.

- She is a business major.
- He earned a journalism degree.
- She is an English major.

Monthlong/yearlong

One word

More than/over

Over refers to a spatial relationship. More than is for numerals.

- The player hit the volley over the net.
- The player has hit more than 80 home runs.

Myriad

An indefinitely large number or great number of persons or things. Do not use with of

- The library has myriad books.
- There are myriad options for eating in Seattle.

Office

Use lowercase except for words that are proper nouns or adjectives: the office of multicultural affairs, or when office is the official and formal name: University of Idaho Office of Multicultural Affairs.

Over

Over refers to a spatial relationship. More than is for numerals.

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Percent

Always use numerals but spell out the word percent. The symbol % is permissible only in charts. When the sentence starts with a number, spell it out.

- Only 17 percent of the students were first generation.
- At Moscow High School, 6 percent of the teachers are Idaho natives.
- Ninety percent of students enjoy academic breaks.

Plural/possessive

With a singular noun just add 's to indicate possession. If the noun is plural and does not end with an s (such as children) add 's (children's). If the plural form already ends in s (Williamses), just add an apostrophe (Williamses'). Singular nouns with two or more syllables and ending in s may be followed by the apostrophe alone (Dr. Nicholas' office).

Plural proper nouns

Lowercase the common noun element in plural uses.

- The Snake and Salmon rivers

Program

Use lowercase except for words that are proper nouns or adjectives: the water resources program, or when program is the official and formal name: University of Idaho Water Resources Program.

SAT

Use only the initials in referring to what used to be called the Scholastic Aptitude Test or the Scholastic Assessment Test. The official name is now SAT.

- The students scored above average on the SAT.

Slide show

Two words.

States

When a state name stands alone spell it out. When used in conjunction with a city name abbreviate all but Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah. Always use a comma after the state when in conjunction with a city. (i.e., He was from Boise, Idaho.) See below for proper state abbreviations.

- Alabama – Ala.
- Arizona – Ariz.
- Arkansas – Ark.
- California – Calif.
- Colorado – Colo.
- Connecticut – Conn.
- Delaware – Del.
- Florida – Fla.
- Georgia – Ga.
- Illinois – Ill.
- Indiana – Ind.
- Kansas – Kan.
- Kentucky – Ky.
- Louisiana – La.
- Maryland – Md.
- Massachusetts – Mass.
- Michigan – Mich.
- Minnesota – Minn.
- Mississippi – Miss.
- Missouri – Mo.
- Montana – Mont.
- Nebraska – Neb.
- Nevada – Nev.
- New Hampshire – N.H.
- New Jersey – N.J.
- New Mexico – N.M.
- New York – N.Y.
- North Carolina – N.C.
- North Dakota – N.D.
- Oklahoma – Okla.
- Oregon – Ore.
- Pennsylvania – Pa.
- Rhode Island – R.I.
- South Carolina – S.C.
- South Dakota – S.D.
- Tennessee – Tenn.
- Vermont – Vt.
- Virginia – Va.
- Washington – Wash.
- West Virginia – W.Va.
- Wisconsin – Wis.
- Wyoming – Wyo.

Statewide

One word.

Temperatures

Use figures for all except zero. Except in technical and scientific contexts, use a word, not a minus sign, to indicate temperatures below zero and spell out the word degree rather than use the degree symbol. See other examples below.

- The day's low was minus 10
- Temperatures were in the 30s (no apostrophe)
- Wrought iron melts between 2700 and 2900 degrees Fahrenheit (no commas)
- Temperatures get higher and lower and go up and down. They do not get warmer or cooler.

Time

Use figures except for noon and midnight. Use a colon to separate hours from minutes. Use a.m. and p.m. lowercase with periods. When identifying a time span use an en dash (a short dash) when both times are same (a.m. or p.m.) and to when different. In general, avoid using o'clock.

- Noon is preferred to 12 p.m.
- Midnight is preferred to 12 a.m.
- Avoid redundancies such as 6 a.m. this morning or 5 p.m. tonight. Simply write today.
- The meeting is at 3:30 p.m.
- The class runs 9-11 a.m. but The class runs from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Time Zones

Capitalize the full name of the time in force within a particular zone: Pacific Standard Time, Pacific Daylight Time. Lowercase all but the region in short forms: the Pacific time zone. Use PDT for Pacific Daylight Time and PST for Pacific Standard Time. Use same format for other time zones.

Titles

Lowercase when following a name. Uppercase if preceding a name. Do not abbreviate common titles. Always spell out associate, professor, assistant and like titles. However, before a full name certain titles are abbreviated and capitalized. Also see military

- Jack Black, dean
- Dean Jack Black
- Doctor to Dr. (Only when person is a medical doctor)
- Governor Chris Gregoire to Gov. Chris Gregoire
- Lieutenant Governor Bob Ross to Lt. Gov. Bob Ross
- Representative Daffy Duck to Rep. Daffy Duck
- Senator Donald Duck to Sen. Donald Duck
- Reverend to the Rev. Joe Smith (note "the" is necessary)

Trademark names

Substitute with generic name unless unavoidable. Capitalize when it is a registered trademark. Consult trademark guide if in question.

- tissue instead of Kleenex
- crayon instead of Crayola
- garbage bin instead of Dumpster
- copy not Xerox

Twitter

A message-distribution system. Capitalize the proper name. The verb is to tweet. As a noun, a Twitter message is a tweet.

Under

Under refers to a spatial relationship. Less than is for numerals.

- The cat hid under the table.
- It's hard to be a crazy cat lady in an apartment less than 500 square feet.

United States

U.S. is acceptable as a noun or adjective for United States. In headlines, it's US.

University of Idaho

Spell out on all first references. For internal copy second reference can be UI or Idaho as long as there will be no confusion between the university and the state. When using university on second reference, lowercase. In identifying campuses do not use a comma after main designation. Boise, Couer d'Alene and Idaho Falls are centers, not campuses. Twin Falls is an extension.

- University of Idaho Boise
- Washington State University Tri-Cities
- University of California San Diego

Vandal Card

Two words. Capitalize.

VandalGear

One word. Capitalize.

VandalMail

One word. Two capital letters.

VandalWeb

One word. Two capital letters.

Versus/verses

Verses are lines of poetry. Versus is against or in contrast to. Spell out in ordinary writing. In short expressions the abbreviation is permissible. For court cases use "v."

- The issue of Fords vs. Chevys has long been argued.
- I would rather be living in Idaho versus New York.
- Grazing rights were determined in the case of Butterberry v. Holsteinville.

Vice versa

Not visa versa

Web

Short form for World Wide Web. See examples below for proper uses.

- website, webcam, webcast, webmaster, the web, webpage, web feed

World class/world-class

As a noun, two words. As an adjective, hyphenate.