

Community College of Philadelphia

Grammar and Punctuation Styleguide

This styleguide applies to the Community College of Philadelphia website, and all publications and materials produced by the Division of Marketing and Government Relations. In addition to common grammar rules, this guide is based on the *Associated Press Stylebook* and *The Associated Press Guide to Punctuation*.

A

abbreviations (also see degrees, majors, U.S., company names)

In order to abbreviate or use the letters of the name of an organization, office, etc., spell out on the first mention, followed by the abbreviation in parentheses. The abbreviation can be used throughout the rest of the piece.

example:

The College's Behavioral Health/Human Services (BHHS) program prepares students for work or transfer upon graduation.

academic and professional titles

Abbreviate these titles when used before a full name outside direct quotations: Dr., Gov., Lt. Gov., Mr., Mrs., Rep., the Rev. and Sen.

Acronyms

Abbreviate companies, organizations and institutions that are widely known by their abbreviations:

example:

IBM, NAACP, NATO, UPS

Courtesy or professional titles

Spell out titles before a name except Dr., Mr., Mrs. and Ms. when they are used in direct quotations.

Jr., Sr.

Separate abbreviations junior and senior before an individual's name with a comma. (exception to AP style)

example:

John Smith, Jr. is the president of a local company.

academic titles (also see titles)

Lowercase titles when they appear after a name or are separated by commas; capitalize when the title precedes a name. Words that describe an occupation, such as author, professor or architect, are never capitalized, unless they begin a sentence.

example:

Jane Smith, assistant professor of Art, gave a lecture.

Professor Smith teaches three classes.

addresses

Abbreviate direction before streets, and abbreviate only Ave., Blvd., and St. when used with a specific, numbered address. Spell out and capitalize when used without a numbered address. Lowercase when referring to more than one street.

example:

1420 N. Charles Street

North Charles Street

25 Falls Road

At the intersection of 18th and Spring Garden streets

Asian-Americans

Hyphenate this term and similar constructions.

Exception: Native Americans

ages (also see numbers)

Use figures and hyphenate when used as a modifier.

example:

My daughter is 5 years old.

My 5-year-old daughter went to the movies.

Jane, 5, likes to go to school.

alumni, alumna, alumnus, alumnae

Use alumnus for an individual male, alumna for an individual female, alumni for a group of males, alumnae for a group of females and alumni when referring to a group of men and women.

Athletic Center

the College's new name of the Gymnasium

B

bi-

No hyphen with this prefix.

example:

That newspaper is a bimonthly publication.

Bonnell Building

room abbreviation: B

bulleted lists (also see *colon* in punctuation section)

Bulleted lists attract readers' attention and are useful for identifying important points. If there is an introductory sentence with a colon before a bulleted list, uppercase the first word of the bullet if the bullet is a complete sentence (independent clause) and use ending punctuation.

example:

The report outlines several findings:

- The population that was studied prefers e-mail messages to voicemail messages.
- Participants in the study were more likely to respond to the color ad, not the black and white ad.

If there is an introductory sentence with a colon before a bulleted list and the bullet is not a complete sentence (dependent clause), lowercase the first word and do not use punctuation at the end.

example:

If you would like to participate in this art project, you will need the following items:

- three brushes
- blue, yellow and red paint

Follow the same rules if there is not an introductory sentence.

C

capitalization (see also academic titles; titles)

city

Capitalize as part of a proper name and formal title before a name. Capitalize before the name of the city (exception to AP style). Lowercase elsewhere.

example:

Kansas City

City of Philadelphia

City Manager John Smith

I live in Philadelphia. The city is a great place to live.

College Community, College Family

Uppercase these terms when speaking about the students and employees of the College as a whole.

Center for Business and Industry (CBI)

room abbreviation: C

colloquialisms

Best to avoid unless it is part of someone's quote.

comma (see punctuation section)

We do not use the serial comma, unless there is "and," "or" between one item.

example:

I bought apples, oranges and grapes at the market.

The student has earned a Science degree, Health Services Management degree, and Culture, Science, and Technology Degree.

The programs included Art and Design, Photographic Imaging, and Architecture.

Community College of Philadelphia

Never use the abbreviation CCP. Capitalize “College” when referring to our institution. Do not use the with Community College of Philadelphia.

example:

There are several events scheduled at the College today.

Community College of Philadelphia is located at 1700 Spring Garden Street.

company names (also see abbreviations)

Capitalize company names unless the company does not spell their names with a capital letter.

Note: If a company name that begins with a lowercase letter is the first word of a sentence, capitalize the first letter.

example:

eBay

EBay attracts thousands of customers a day.

Do not spell company names in all capital letters unless the letters are individually pronounced.

example:

IBM, CSX

Spell and space company names according to their official spellings.

example:

FedEx, Hewlett-Packard, Barnes & Noble

composition titles (books, music, play—see titles)

comprise

A whole comprises its parts; means consists of. “Comprised of” is incorrect.

example:

The department comprises both divisions.

course titles

Capitalize and do not put in quotations when the formal name of the course is written as it appears in the College catalog. When referring to course areas in general, lowercase.

example:

Every student must take Introductory English.

All of the intermediate biology courses are full.

coursework

D

data

Since this noun is plural, it normally takes the plural forms of verbs and pronouns. Use singular forms when the group or quantity is regarded as a unit.

example:

The data have been carefully collected.

The data is sound.

dates

Spell out months and days of the week. Abbreviate Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec. when used in a date. When listing only the month and the year, do not separate with a comma. Use commas when the month, year, and date are used. Do not use th, st or nd superscripts with dates.

example:

Sept. 1, 2003

September 2003

class of '03

the '80s

Sept. 2, 2003, was the first day of school.

The lecture is scheduled for Friday, Sept. 5.

degrees and majors

Capitalize full degree titles; lowercase the shorter form.

example:

Bachelor of Arts degree

bachelor's degree

baccalaureate degree

Master of Arts

Master of Science degree in Mathematics

master's program in Public Administration

doctorate

Use periods in abbreviations of academic degrees.

B.A., B.S., M.B.A., M.P.A., Ph.D., D.Ed., M.Ed., Psy.D

When referring to degrees in general, lowercase the first letter and use 's.

example:

Fifty teachers hold master's degrees.

Note: It is more common to not use periods in the abbreviation of Master of Business Administration and other degrees when it is used to describe individuals with this educational background, not an individual's degree.

example:

The firm just hired several MBAs for their business accounting division.

departments and divisions

Capitalize names of departments, offices and divisions. Only capitalize the words department, office or division if it is an official title.

example:

the Office of Financial Aid (official title)
Financial Aid office
Division of Math, Science and Health Careers
Psychology, Education and Human Services Department
Allied Health Department

E

e-book, e-business, e-commerce, email, e-shopping

Use a hyphen after the “e” except for email.

emeritus

Lowercase when used after a name with a title and uppercase before a name.

example:

Professor Emeritus Jane Smith

Jane Smith, professor emeritus

F

farther, further

Farther involves physical distance, and *further* indicates to a greater degree.

example:

I can run farther than you.

I am looking into this matter further.

fewer, less

Use *fewer* with things that can be counted; use *less* with quantities that are considered whole or as a single item.

example:

fewer jobs

less income

The tickets cost less than \$5.00.

Fewer than 100 people attended the party.

full time, full-time

Hyphenate when used as an adjective.

example:

full-time student

I work full time.

fundraising, fundraiser

One word in all cases.

G

Gymnasium

renamed the Athletic Center

H

health care

Spell as two words.

example:

Health care is a field that rapidly changes.

I reviewed the health care plan today.

high-tech

Hispanic

Preferred to the term Latino.

home page

Not homepage.

I

Internet

Capitalize this term, as well as the Web.

J

Jr., Sr.

Abbreviate and separate from the last name with a comma.

L

long term, long-term

Hyphenate when used as a modifier.

example: This will be best for the long term. I have a long-term assignment.

long time, longtime

Hyphenate when used as a modifier.

example: We have known each other a long time. They are longtime friends.

M

majors (see programs)

Term not commonly used at the College; program is preferred.

mid-

No hyphen unless a capitalized word follows or when mid precedes a figure.

example:

mid-Atlantic

mid-America

midterm

midsemester

mid-80s

millions, billions

Indicate amounts with a dollar sign and *million* or *billion*. Always use numerals; do not spell out numbers.

example:

The house is worth \$2.5 million.

Do not mix millions and billions.

example:

2.5 billion people, not 2 billion, 500 million people.

Do not drop million or billion when describing a range.

example:

He is worth from \$2 million to \$4 million.

Mint Building

room abbreviation: M

monetary figures

Do not use decimal places for monetary figures. For amounts over \$1 million, use up to two decimal places.

example:

\$50

\$4.35 million

more than, over

More than is preferred with numerals; over generally refers to spatial relationships.

example:

The plane flew over the mountain.

The event hosted more than 100 people.

multicultural

One word.

N**newspaper names**

Italicize newspaper and periodical names.

non-

In general, no hyphen when using this prefix. Use a hyphen if the word becomes awkward or hard to understand, especially when a letter is repeated.

example:

noncredit

non-nuclear

no one

numbers (also see ages)

Spell out whole numbers below 10, and use figures for 10 and above.

When large numbers must be spelled out, hyphenate numbers when the first word ends in a “y.”

example:

twenty-one

one hundred fifty-eight

Note: Do not begin a sentence with a number.

example:

Ten days ago, I visited my aunt.

O

offices (see also **Capitalization**)

Capitalize when used before the actual name of an office; lowercase otherwise.

example:

Office of Financial Aid, Financial Aid office

offline

online

on-site

Hyphenate when used as an adjective or adverb.

example:

on-site classes, print on-site

P

Pavilion Building

not Pavillion Building; room abbreviation: P

percentages

Use the word, not the symbol. Always use numerals with percentages; do not spell out.

example:

More than 80 percent of students attend class.
He earned a 5 percent increase this year.

photo captions

Use a period only if the caption is more than one complete sentence long.

example:

Employees celebrate the holidays

New students are starting their path at the College

The annual event hosted staff and students in the Pavilion. The successful evening helped raise funds for scholarships.

professor

Always lowercase.

programs

Preferred term at College, not major.

example: Nursing students; Helen, a student at the College, is interested in studying business

Capitalize academic and student program names, but lowercase the names of fields of study.

example: the Culinary Arts program; the field of nursing; student services at many colleges

R

Regional Centers

Capitalize the Northeast, Northwest and West Regional Centers. Not referred to as “campuses.”

room

Capitalize room when used with a figure.

example:

The lecture will be held in Room 17.

S

seasons

Always lowercase unless part of a formal name.

example:

John is prepared for the fall 2013 semester.

Many people enjoy the Summer Olympics.

states

Lowercase *state* when used in all state constructions:

example:

state of New York

Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Massachusetts and Virginia are legally Commonwealths. This term is only necessary for formal or legal contexts.

Capitalize state names when they stand alone in textual material.

In datelines and text, abbreviate the state name when used with a city, except for Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah.

Ala., Ariz., Ark., Calif., Colo., Conn., Del., Fla., Ga., Ill., Ind., Kan., Ky., La., Md., Mass., Mich., Minn., Miss., Mo., Mont., Neb., Nev., N.H., N.J., N.M., N.Y., N.C., N.D., Okla., Ore., Pa., R.I., S.C., S.D., Tenn., Vt., Va., Wash., W.Va., Wis., Wyo.

State postal codes for states are different:

AL., AZ., AR., CA, CO, CT, DE, FL, GA, IL, IN, KS., KY, LA, MA, MD, MI, MN, MS, MO, MT, NE, NV, NH, NJ, NM, NY, NC, ND, OK, OR, PA, RI, SC, SD, TN, VT, VA, WA, WV, WI, WY

Postal code abbreviations for Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah: AK, HI, ID, IA, ME, OH, TX, UT. Also, District of Columbia – DC.

T

telephone numbers

Use periods or hyphens between digits and phone numbers with no parentheses.

that, which

That is preferred in most situations. *That* introduces a restrictive clause (restricts meaning), and *which* introduces a nonrestrictive clause. If a comma is necessary in the sentence, use *which*.

example:

Jane is wearing the sweater that her mother gave her.

The sweater, which is made of wool, was very expensive.

The time of day that seems best for her is 10 a.m.

time of day

Use a colon in a figure of time only to denote minutes.

example:

3 p.m., 3:30 p.m.

Use a.m. or p.m. once when denoting a frame of time; use both a.m. or p.m. if necessary.

example:

The lecture will be held from 3 - 5 p.m. on Monday.

We met from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Do not say 12 noon or 12 midnight; preferably use 12 p.m. or 12 a.m.

Do not separate the time from the day with a comma.

example:

The appointment is at 2 p.m. on Saturday, May 12.

titles (people); also see academic titles

Capitalize official titles preceding a name; do not capitalize titles following a name or set off by commas. This rule applies to both academic and administrative titles. Professor is never capitalized.

Do not forget to capitalize the company or organization name when used with a title.

example:

John Smith is an assistant professor of Biology at Community College of Philadelphia.

Long titles usually sound and read better after a name, not before.

example:

Bob Johnson, assistant superintendent for instruction, attended the meeting.

titles (works)

Note: These are exceptions to the Associated Press rules; the Modern Language Association guidelines are followed for titles of works.

The following are set in italics:

titles and subtitles of published books,
pamphlets, proceedings and collections,
periodicals and newspapers
and sections of newspapers published separately

titles of collections of poetry and long poems

titles of plays and motion pictures

titles of operas, oratorios and other long musical compositions

titles of works of art

The following are set in plain type and enclosed in quotation marks:

titles of articles and features in periodicals and newspapers

titles of short stories, essays and chapter titles

toward

not towards

U

United States

In text, spell out when used as a noun.

Abbreviate when used as an adjective.

example:

We live in the United States.

For our trip, we had to exchange our U.S. currency.

URLs/Web addresses

Incorporate Web addresses into a sentence instead of saying “click on,” or “visit.” Indicate what words will be used as the link, and provide the address for the website. Do not add punctuation to an Internet address unless it falls at the end of a sentence, in which case a period may be added. If an address won’t fit on one line, break the address after a forward slash or before a period. Use www in addresses unless referring to a home page.

V

voice mail

W

Web

webcam

webcast

webmaster

web page

website

West Building

room abbreviation: W

Winnet Building

full name: Winnet Student Life Building

room abbreviation: S

workday

workforce

workout

workweek

World Wide Web

Punctuation Guide

ampersand

Only use this symbol when it is a formal name of a business. Spell out the word “and.”

apostrophes

Use a backward apostrophe when identifying alumni, graduation date and year, (available in Microsoft

Word’s “insert” menu under symbols normal text), special characters, single closing quote).

Creating a shortcut for this symbol for those who use it often is highly recommended.

example:

Joe Smith, ’80, was elected to the finance committee.

colons

Use a colon:

To introduce and separate ideas.

example:

For our vacation, we brought a number of items: a map, suntan lotion, guidebooks and a sense of adventure.

Capitalize the first letter of the word after a colon if it is part of a complete sentence.

example:

The professor issued an ultimatum: Students must write four papers for the course.

Do not use a colon immediately after a verb.

example:

Wrong: The recipe requires: flour, two eggs and brown sugar.

Right: The recipe requires flour, two eggs and brown sugar.

commas

Use a comma:

Before a coordinating conjunction joining two independent clauses.

example:

Sue had planned to leave work early, but she was in a meeting for two hours.

To separate a dependent (subordinate) clause from an independent clause when the dependent clause

comes first in the sentence.

example:

After I left the library, I went to the computer lab.

To separate introductory words and phrases from the rest of the sentence.

example:

Unfortunately, I forgot my umbrella.

Annoyed by the new rules, the woman complained to the manager.

To separate a nonrestrictive phrase or clause from the rest of a sentence. (A nonrestrictive phrase or clause is added to a sentence but does not change the sentence's basic meaning.)

example:

My sister, who is a mail carrier, is afraid of dogs.

Mail carriers who have been bitten by dogs are afraid of them.

To separate items in a series. Use only one comma.

example:

I plan to take math, psychology and writing next semester.

Include the second comma in a series when necessary to avoid confusion:

example:

She ordered a Coke, ham and cheese, and apple pie.

To separate coordinate adjectives: two or more adjectives that are not joined by a coordinating conjunction and that equally modify the same noun or pronoun.

example:

The thirsty, hungry children returned from a day at the beach.

Sarah is an excellent psychology student.

To separate parenthetical expressions from the clauses they modify.

example:

The pope, for example, does not need to get a job.

To separate a transition from the clause it modifies.

example:

In addition, I will clean the windows.

To separate dates, place names and long numbers.

example:

Oct. 10, 1961, is my birthday.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, is an exciting city.

To separate phrases expressing contrast.

example:

John's good nature, not his wealth, explains his popularity.

To set off nonrestrictive appositives.

example:

Grant, a famous Civil War general, holds an important place in history.

John Smith, and his wife, Jane, left on an early flight to Europe.

dashes

Use a dash:

To indicate sudden changes in tone or thought and to set off some sentence elements.

Note: Dashes are often overused. Sometimes a simple comma will do. Reserve the dramatic dash for cases when you seek the most emphasis.

example:

The movie business is undergoing dramatic changes—changes that may affect what movies are made and shown.

In spite of my frequent reminders—and I reminded him nearly every day—John still failed to lock up his bike.

exclamation points

Overused. In general, use only if you are quoting a written source.

hyphens

Use hyphens for compound modifiers.

example:

I washed my mud-covered vehicle.

His well-intentioned meaning was lost on the woman.

A 30-year-old woman has won a national book award.

parentheses

Parentheses are used to indicate information indirectly relating to the topic of a sentence. They can be distracting to the reader and should be used as a last resort when information cannot be contained in the sentence or cannot be used with a dash. Try rewriting the sentence. Parentheses are commonly used to represent a passing comment or aside; be sure that the information you want to put in parentheses is necessary and important.

example:

Wrong: It is safe to say, (for the time being), that we have a good chance of winning the game.

Right: It is safe to say, for the time being, that we have a good chance of winning the game.

Do not use parentheses to list information.

example:

Wrong: Other colleges (Temple, Drexel and Penn) also offer that program.

Right: Other colleges, such as Temple, Drexel and Penn, also offer that program.

Place commas, semi-colons, or dashes after the closing parenthesis, not before.

example:

I phoned him when I arrived (as I had promised), and we went out to dinner.

Place punctuation marks outside a closing parenthesis when the phrase is a not a complete sentence.

example:

I phoned him when I arrived (as I had promised).

Place punctuation marks inside a closing parenthesis when the phrase is a complete sentence. Capitalize the first word of the parenthetical phrase.

example:

My friend told me she was going shopping. (I found out later that is was untrue.)

Note: Complete sentences that are dependent upon the surrounding material do not need to end with a period or be capitalized.

example:

Carrie is next on the waiting list (she has waited over a year for this opportunity) and is excited about moving to her new apartment.

quotation marks

Follow these examples:

I heard her say, "Let's go to the party."

"Let's go to the party," she said.

"The party," she said sadly, "is over."

"I never wanted to go to the party in the first place," Joe said. "They were not planning many fun activities."

semicolons

Use a semicolon:

Between two main clauses.

example:

She requested that the students pay rent, help out around the house or move out; the students resisted this plan.

Between a main clause related by "however," "thus" or another conjunctive adverb.

example:

Her husband's vacation was cancelled; consequently, the family will be staying home this summer.

Between items in a series.

example:

The advisory board comprises Amy Johnson, B.S. '81; John Smith, M.B.A. '90; and Sue Smith, B.S. '93.

(note the semicolon before "and")

Do not use a semicolon to separate a subordinate clause from a main clause.

Do not use a semicolon to introduce a series.

One space is used between sentences.

Questions Regarding Style

If you have any questions regarding style, call the Marketing coordinator/writer at ext. 6206.