



AP TIP SHEET



MONTHS/DATES/TIMES

Abbreviate months with six or more letters if they are used with a specific date. Spell out those with five or fewer letters.	Aug. 13, June 6, May 31
Spell out the month when it is used without a specific date.	In September, the football team ... The class begins in February 2015.
For days of the month, use only numerals. Do not use nd, rd or th.	Aug. 2, Sept. 3, April 4.
Do not abbreviate days of the week. You usually do not need both a day of the week and a date.	Wednesday, Monday The next game is Oct. 13.
Use numerals, a space, lowercase letters and periods for a.m. and p.m. Do not use extra zeros (7:00) on times.	7 p.m., 10 a.m., 1:45 p.m. 1-2 p.m., 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
Use noon and midnight rather than 12 a.m. or 12 p.m.	The club will meet at noon.

NAMES/TITLES/CLASSES

For all people (adults and students), use full names on first reference. On second reference, use only the last name.	Jane Smith, a high school junior, ... later Smith realized ...
If two people with the same last name are quoted in a story, use first and last names.	... Jane Smith explained. Jenny Smith also believes ...
Formal titles are only capitalized when they appear immediately before a name. Just make sure it's a formal title and not merely a job description (teacher, coach, counselor, etc.). AP wavers on whether "principal" should be capitalized before a name. You can decide.	Jenny Smith, auto club president. Under Mayor Bob Jackson, the town seemed to thrive, but basketball coach Joe Jones told another story. Joe Biden is president.
Sophomore, junior, senior and freshman are lowercase unless at the start of a sentence. Freshmen is the plural of freshman.	For sophomore Sarah Smith, it was... Also, use "first-year student" when possible instead of freshman.
Titles of departments and names of classes are not capitalized unless they are also a language or nationality.	math, science, English, Spanish

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NUMBERS/MONEY

In most usage, spell out numbers under 10. Exceptions beyond dates and times shown above:

- Addresses: 6 Maple St.
- Ages, even for inanimate objects: Beth, a 15-year-old; the 2-year-old building
- Dollars and cents: \$5; 5 cents.
- Measurements (such as dimensions and speed): 6 feet tall, 9-by-12 rug; 7 miles per hour
- Temperature: 8 degrees
- Millions, billions: 3 million people
- Percentages: 4% (per a recent style change, use the symbol instead of spelling out percent)

Spell out any number that appears at the beginning of a sentence. The one exception to this rule is a year, but we encourage you to avoid starting a sentence with a year: 1981 was the last time the high school won a state title.

Do not spell out monetary amounts or use extra zeros: \$6 or \$2.30, but NOT \$6.00 or six dollars.

SPORTS

Do not capitalize names of sports, their competitive level (varsity, junior varsity, etc.) or specific positions.	varsity basketball; quarterback
When referring to a gender-specific sport, note the placement of the apostrophe in the possessive.	girls' field hockey
Note that "team" and the name of the school are singular nouns; but the school's mascot is generally plural.	Auburn scores three points; the Tigers score three points
Use numerals for records and scores but not necessarily points.	The team, now 7-3, won 51-48 after scoring three points in the final six seconds.
Note unusual style for rankings.	The team was No. 1 (NOT number one); No. 1 Auburn beat No. 6 Georgia; first-place team

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PUNCTUATION/ABBREVIATIONS/QUOTES

Apostrophes usually show possession, so usually you shouldn't use them to make acronyms and numbers plural. An exception is with individual letters such as in grading.	1970s; ABCs; she received six 4s; she received six A's.
Not all cities need a state name with them, but those that do should NOT get a postal code but rather AP abbreviations (see Stylebook).	Seattle; Bellevue, Wash.; Portland, Ore. (NOT WA or OR)
Place quotation marks around almost all composition titles, but not reference, newspaper or magazine names.	"American Idol"; "Born This Way"; Time magazine
Capitalize the first letter of a full-sentence quote.	Jones said, "All of us were excited."
When using a sentence fragment as a quotation, do not set it off with a comma unless the sentence requires one for proper grammar. Do not capitalize the first letter of a sentence fragment quote.	Jones told the crowd to "get pumped up" about the pep rally.
When a full-sentence quotation is introduced or followed by attribution, place a comma between them, unless the quote is a question.	"All of us were excited," Jones said. "Were we all excited?" Jones asked.

OTHER AP, WRITING STYLE TOPICS/COMMON MISTAKES

Capitalizing non-proper nouns in headlines - Don't do it
No "Oxford/Harvard" commas in a series - This is opposite of APA/Academic style
Listing times as 1:00 pm instead of 1 p.m.; Time spans also should be listed 1-3 p.m. and not 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. However, if they span from morning until afternoon, list it as 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
Do not use "the," "and" and "are" in headlines, unless they are part of an official name of an event, entity or structure.
Don't wait until the second or third sentence in a quote to identify the speaker. ID them with the first sentence, even if it is a short one.
Event information should be listed in this order: time, date, place. For example, the game will take place at 4 p.m. on Feb. 27 at Neville Arena.
Be sure to include a comma after a date or city/state listing in the middle of a sentence. For instance, "Students will graduate on Saturday, May 9, at Neville Arena."
Papers, presentations and movies are "titled" and not "entitled." You may be entitled to believe otherwise, but you would be wrong.
Do not stack quotes from different speakers on top of each other. Separate them with transition sentences.
Avoid using "you" and "we" in calls to action for Campus Notices and other submissions to OCM since you do not specifically know who will be reading them.