

May 16, 2023

MEMO TO: Traci N.T. Fujita, Director of Council Services

F R O M: Nālani Fujihara, Hawaiian Language Communications Specialist

SUBJECT: **THE AP STYLEBOOK WORKSHOP** (PAF 23-021(6))

On April 4, 11, 18 and 25, the Associated Press held a virtual workshop on the AP Stylebook. Experts presented on specific topics and interacted with participants during a question-and-answer section at the end of each session. The four-week online workshop included interactive modules and discussion groups, how-to videos and stylebook and study guides. The notes attached include information about the topics that emerged.

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cc: David Raatz, Deputy Director of Council Services

AP STYLE TOPIC USE**Plurals**

Add *es* for words ending in *ch*, *s*, *sh*, *ss*, *x* and *z*.

For words ending in *is*, change the plural to *es*.

For Latin-root words ending in *us* change *us* to *i*.

For Latin-root words ending in *a* change *a* to *ae*.

For most Latin-root words ending in *um* add *s*.

Words as words: do not use 's. (Exception: do's and don'ts)

For most proper names ending in *es*, *s* or *z*, add *es*.

For figures, add *s*.

With single letters as words, use 's.

With multiple letters, add *s*.

Possessives

For plural nouns ending in *s*, add only an apostrophe.

For nouns plural in form but singular in meaning, add only an apostrophe.

Add only an apostrophe when a plural word occurs in the formal name of a singular entity.

With singular proper names ending in *s*, use only an apostrophe.

Do not add an apostrophe to a word ending in *s* when it is used primarily in a descriptive sense.

Use an apostrophe with a quantity followed by a noun.

Abbreviations and acronyms

Don't follow the full name of an organization with an abbreviation or acronym in parentheses.

If an abbreviation or acronym isn't clear on second reference, use a shorthand word.

Avoid abbreviations and most acronyms in headlines, except those that are widely recognizable.

Abbreviate titles when used before a full name and certain military designations.

After the name of a corporate entity, abbreviate Co., Corp., Inc. and Ltd.

Abbreviate Ave., Blvd. and St. in numbered addresses.

Spell out address names such as Alley, Terrace and Place.

Spell out state names when standing alone or when combined with a city.

Exceptions: Datelines, lists and short-form listings of party affiliation.

Never abbreviate the following state names:

Use periods in most two-letter abbreviations.

AP, a trademark, is an exception.

In headlines, do not use periods or abbreviations.

Hyphens

Hyphens in compound modifiers

If the hyphen makes the meaning clearer, use it. If it just adds clutter and distraction to the sentence, don't use it.

DO use hyphen if it's needed to make the meaning clear and avoid unintended meanings.

NO hyphen is needed when such terms are used as modifiers if the meaning is clear and unambiguous without the hyphen.

Suffixes that generally require hyphens include:

Prefixes that generally require hyphens include:

Don't use a hyphen to designate dual heritage.

Do hyphenate other compound verbs:

In general, hyphenate compound nouns.

Use hyphens for ranges, not en dashes.

Commas

Serial comma

Clarity is the biggest rule.

Use commas to separate elements in a series, but do not put a comma before the conjunction in most simple series.

Include a final comma in a simple series if omitting it could make the meaning unclear.

Put a comma before the concluding conjunction in a series if an integral element of the series requires a conjunction.

Use a comma also before the concluding conjunction in a complex series of phrases.

Oxford serial comma

Quotations

Put the attribution at the end of the quotation.

When switching between speakers, you can put the attribution first. Don't put quotation marks around words that the speaker could not have used.

If the quoted statement ends with a question mark or exclamation point, don't use a comma in addition.

Use single quote marks in headlines.

Use quotation marks around composition titles.

Written word

When quoting written words, retain the style used by the writer; do not alter the written words even if they don't match AP style.

(SIC) We don't use (sic) to show that quoted material or person's words include a misspelling, incorrect grammar or peculiar usage. Instead, paraphrase if possible.

Job titles vs. job descriptions

A formal title generally is one that denotes a scope of authority, professional activity or academic activity.

Other titles serve primarily as occupational descriptions.

Organizations and institutions

Use lowercase for internal elements of an organization when they have names that are **widely used generic terms**.

Capitalize internal elements of an organization when they have names that are **not widely used generic terms**.

Numerals

In general, spell out one through nine.

Use figures for 10 or above and whenever preceding a unit of measure of referring to ages of people, animals, events or things. Also in all tabular matter, and in statistical and sequential forms.

Note: Time measurements such as seconds, minutes, days, months, years aren't included in the "units of measure" exception that calls for using figures for 1 through 9. We do use figures for ages. So: a *six-year plan* , but a *6-year-old plan*.

Use figures in almost all uses for 10 or above. **Exceptions:** At the start of a sentence or in casual uses such as *one in a million* or literary/special uses such as *four score and twenty years ago* .

1-9 as figures

Percent sign

Use % sign when paired with a number.

For amounts less than 1%, precede the decimal with a zero.

In casual uses, use words rather than figures and the percent sign.

Avoid starting a sentence with a percentage.

If it's necessary to start a sentence with a percentage, spell out both.

Use decimals, not fractions, in percentages.

For range, you can use to, and or a hyphen.

Dates and Times

Spell out the days of the week in most cases.

Spell out names of months when standing alone without a date.

In tables, charts and graphs, use three-letter forms without a period.

When used with a specific date, spell out March, April, May, June and July. Abbreviate the other seven months when used with a specific date.

When a phrase includes only a month and year, don't set off the year with commas.

When a phrase refers to a month, day and year, set off the year with commas.

When referring to days, always use Arabic figures, without st, nd, rd or th.

When referring to a month and day within the current year, don't include the year.

When referring to a month and day in a past or future year, include the year and set it off with commas.

Use an s without an apostrophe to indicate spans of decades or centuries.

For the time of day, use figures -- without the colon and zeroes on the hour -- and always lowercase with periods for a.m. and p.m.

This applies when indicating a range, as well.

Use time zone abbreviations after a clock time if referring to events likely to affect people in more than one time zone or television or radio programs.

Avoid using the term midnight if it will create ambiguity about when an event or deadline is taking place.

lists, bulleted lists

AP uses dashes instead of bullets to introduce individual sections of a list.

Put a space between the dash or bullet and the first word of each item in the list.

Capitalize the first word following the dash or bullet.

Use periods, not semicolons, at the end of each section, whether it is a full sentence or a phrase.

Avoid spelling out numbers at the beginning of bullet points.

Capitalization

PROPER NAMES: Capitalize common nouns when they are an integral part of the full name for a person, place or thing.

historical periods and events

Capitalize the names of widely recognized epochs in anthropology, archaeology, geology and history.

Capitalize also widely recognized popular names for the periods and events.

Capitalize only the proper nouns or adjectives in general descriptions of a period.

Civil Rights Movement/civil rights movement

Webster's New World College Dictionary: the civil rights movement [often the C- R- M-] the political movement in the U.S., esp. in the mid-20th cent., supporting civil rights for African Americans.

Merriam-Webster: Civil Rights Movement or less commonly American Civil Rights Movement: a movement for racial equality in the U.S. that came to prominence in the 1950s and 1960s.

	<p>Capitalize when referring to the specific push, mainly in the 1950s and '60s, for equal rights and justice for Black people under the law in the United States.</p> <p>Lowercase when writing generally about civil rights movements or a civil rights movement that is not this specific one.</p>
course numbers	<p>Use arabic numerals and capitalize the subject when used with a numeral.</p>
composition titles	<p>Apply these guidelines to the titles of books, movies, plays, poems, albums, songs, operas, radio and television programs, lectures, speeches, and works of art.</p> <p>Capitalize all words in a title except articles (<i>a, an, the</i>); prepositions of three or fewer letters (<i>for, of, on, up</i>, etc.); and conjunctions of three or fewer letters (<i>and, but, for, nor, or, so, yet</i>, etc.) unless any of those start or end the title.</p>
Inclusive Storytelling	<p>Gives voice and visibility to those who may be missing or misrepresented in traditional narratives of history and daily journalism.</p> <p>Helps readers to recognize themselves in our stories and better understand people who differ from them in race, age, gender, class, etc.</p> <p>Makes our work stronger, more relevant, more trustworthy.</p> <p>Is essential to accuracy and fairness.</p> <p>Should be part of everyday conversations, decision-making and coverage.</p>
<u>Shift in Focus</u>	<p>Step back and ask, "Who's affected?" "Are these voices reflected in our content?" Find those missing voices and faces.</p> <p>Don't treat communities as monoliths. No ethnicity, race, religion or region acts as one. So be specific. Don't use short-hand in headlines or social posts.</p> <p>Reaction stories need to include reactions from a diverse group of people. Build relationships with diverse people ahead of news events. And use the wider AP to find sources.</p>
<u>Key Principles</u>	<p>Language matters.</p>

Interpretation of words can vary greatly.

Relevance is key.

Respect is key: for sources/story subjects, and for readers.


Specifics are accurate. Generalities often aren't.

Style requires judgment

When faced with a word or phrasing that is not mentioned in the Stylebook, you may need to use your own judgement.
Real life usage doesn't always align perfectly with an AP style rule. You might need to look at two or three sort-of-relevant style rules to interpret them.
Different editors might make a different choice. It's not black and white.

Style pet peeves

Farther is distance/Further is depth.
YES: Protester
NO: Protestor
Use specific language rather than jargon.
YES: African American
NO: African-American



No hyphen: Black American

Don't use the term massive to describe things without mass.

EXAMPLES

- > *churches, lenses, parishes, glasses, boxes, buzzes.*
- > *oasis = oases*
- > *parenthesis = parentheses*
- > *thesis = theses*
- > *alumnus = alumni*
- > *alumna = alumnae*
- > *memorandums, referendums, stadiums*
- > *His speech had too many "ifs," "ands" and "buts."*
- > *Charlezes, Joneses, Gonzalezes*
- > *The custom began in the 1920s.*
- > *The airline has two 727s.*
- > *Temperatures will be in the low 20s.*
- > *There were five Size 7s.*
- > *Mind your p's and q's.*
- > *He learned the three R's and brought home a report card with four A's and two B's.*
- > *The Oakland A's won the pennant.*
- > *She knows her ABCs.*
- > *I gave him five IOUs.*
- > *Four VIPs were there.*

- > *the churches' needs*
- > *the girls' toys*
- > *the horses' food*
- > *the ships' wake*
- > *states' rights*
- > *the VIPs' entrance*
- > *mathematics' rule*
- > *measles' effects*
- > *General Motors' profits...*
- > *...the United States' wealth*
- > *Achilles' heel*
- > *Agnes' book*
- > *Dickens' novels*
- > *Kansas' schools*
- > *citizens band radio*
- > *a teachers college*
- > *a writers guide*
- > *a Teamsters request*
- > *a day's pay*
- > *two weeks' vacation*
- > *three months' work*
- > *five years' probation*

- > *The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)*
- > *Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD)*

> *Company, union, organization, etc.*

> *FBI, EU, US, CIA, IRS, NASA, NATO, COVID*

> *Dr. Anthony Fauci*

> *Gov. Kathy Hochel*

> *Gen. Mark Milley*

> *They plan to visit Oregon, Washington and Idaho.*

> *His favorite cities are Bend, Oregon, and Walla Walla, Washington.*

> *D-Ala., R-Mont.*

> *Alaska, Hawai'i, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas, Utah*

> *U.S., U.N., U.K., B.A., B.C.*

> *AP, GI, ID, EU*

> *"Lawyers fight for man they say US wrongly deported to Haiti"*

YES: It's a guide about how to use hyphens wisely.

NO: It's a how-to-use-hyphens-wisely guide.

> *Small-business owner.*

> *Better-qualified candidate.*

> *Little-known song.*

> *German-speaking people.*

> *Low-income workers.*

> *Third grade teacher.*

> *Chocolate chip cookie.*

> *Special effects embellishment.*

> *Climate change report.*

> *Public land management.*

> *-free (gluten-free)*

> *-based (commission-based)*

> *-elect (president-elect)*

> *self- (self-soothing)*

> *all- (all-encompassing)*

> *ex- (ex-employee)*

> *half- (half-hearted)*

> *African American*

> *Asian American*

> *Italian American*

> *She speed-walked her way to victory.*

> *He spoon-fed the baby.*

> *merry-go round*

> *sister-in-law*

> *hand-me-downs*

> Jan. 1-4

- > His grandchildren are Vera, Chuck and Dave.
- > He would nominate Marquez, Bedi, Lyman or Wong.
- > She goes to school, plays league soccer and takes private dance lessons.

- > I had orange juice, toast, and ham and eggs for breakfast.
- > I had ham and eggs, orange juice, and toast for breakfast.
- > The main points to consider are whether the athletes are skillful enough to compete, whether they have the stamina to endure the training, and whether they have the proper mental attitude.

Contrast that with:

- > She goes to school, plays league soccer and takes private dance lessons.
- > We invited the strippers, JFK, and Stalin.

- > "Editing is important," she said.
- > Barret said, "Editing matters now more than ever."
- Quote: I am horrified at your slovenly manners.
- > YES: She said she was horrified at their "slovenly manners."
- > NO: She said she "was horrified at their slovenly manners."
- > "Why should I?" he asked.

- > China sets this year's economic growth target at 'around 5%'
- > "Of Mice and Men"
- > "Star Wars"
- > "The Magic Flute"

> Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto, Dr. Benjamin Spock, retired Gen. Colin Powell.

- > astronaut Sally Ride, poet Maya Angelou.
- > U.S. President Joe Biden vs. The U.S. president, Joe Biden vs. Joe Biden, the U.S. president
- > journalist Jeff McMillan vs. A journalist, Jeff McMillan vs. Jeff McMillan, a journalist

- > the board of directors of General Motors.
- > the board of trustees of Columbia University.
- > the history department of Harvard University.
- > the sports department of the Daily Citizen-Leader.

- > *the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches.*
- > *the House of Delegates of the American Medical Association.*
- > *the House of Bishops.*
- > *The House of Deputies of the Episcopal Church.*

> *The Yankees finished second. He had nine months to go.*

- > **PLANES, SHIPS AND SPACECRAFT DESIGNATIONS:** *B-2 bomber, Apollo 9 . (But: Air Force One .) Use Roman numerals if they are part of the official designation: Titan I, Titan II .*
- > **RANK:** *He was my No. 1 choice.*
- > **SEQUENTIAL DESIGNATIONS:** *Act 3, Exit 2, Game 3 .*
- > **POLITICAL DISTRICTS:** *Ward 9, 9th Precinct, 3rd Congressional District .*
- > **RECIPES:** *2 tablespoons of sugar to 1 cup of milk .*
- > **SPEEDS:** *7 mph, winds of 5 to 10 mph .*
- > **TEMPERATURES:** *Use figures except zero. It was 8 degrees below zero or minus 8 .*
- > **VOTES:** *The bill was defeated by a vote of 6-4 . But: a two-vote margin .*
- > **TIMES:** *1 p.m.; 10:30 a.m . But: Spell out numbers less than 10 standing alone and in modifiers: I'll be there in five minutes .*

- > *About 85% of the class graduated.*
- > *The cost of living rose 0.6%.*
- > *She said he has a zero percent chance of winning.*
- > **YES:** *Most sentences don't have to begin with numbers.*
- > **NO:** *89% of sentences don't have to begin with a number.*
- > *Eighty-nine percent of sentences don't have to begin with a number.*
- > *Her mortgage rate is 4.5%.*
- > *12% to 15% OR between 12% and 15% OR 12%-15%.*

> *Jan, Feb, Aug, Sept , etc.*

> *January 2023* was a cold month.

> *Jan. 2, 2016* , was the coldest day of the month.

> YES to *Aug. 3*

> NO to *Aug. 3rd*

> The hearing is scheduled for *June 26* .

> They were married on *June 21, 2014*, in California.

> *the 2000s*.

> *6 p.m., 6:15 p.m.*

> *6 a.m. to 7:45 a.m. or 6-7:45 a.m.*

> Polls close at *9 p.m. EST*.

> The broadcast lasted from *4 p.m. to 6 p.m. PST*.

> YES to *11:59 p.m. Thursday* or *12:01 a.m. Friday*

> NO to *Midnight on Friday*

> *500 participants vs. Five hundred participants.*

> *6,720 participants vs. Six thousand, seven hundred twenty people.*

> *party, river, street, west.*

> *Democratic Party, Mississippi River, Fleet Street, West Virginia.*

> *the party, the river, the street.*

> *the Bronze Age, the Dark Ages, the Middle Ages, the Pliocene Epoch.*

> *the Atomic Age, the Boston Tea Party, the Civil War, the Exodus, the Great Depression, Prohibition.*

> *ancient Greece, classical Rome, the Victorian era, the fall of Rome.*

> *History 6, Philosophy 209* . Otherwise, lowercase: *calculus, world history* .

> Elements of Inclusive Storytelling: *Audience focus, audience value, diverse perspective, bias awareness, inclusive voices, sources*.

> The term *immigration sweep* , for example, could sound as if something or someone dirty needs to be cleaned up.

> Is a person *an addict* , or *a person with a drug dependency* ?

> Is the woman *elderly* , or a *70-year-old marathon runner* ?

> *Survivor* can denote someone who has lived through an injury or disease, but also can apply to someone who endured a threat but escaped injury altogether. Ex: *a mass shooting survivor* .

> Likewise, *victim* can create confusion because it can variously mean someone killed, injured or subjected to mistreatment such as sexual misconduct.

> Avoid imagery conjuring war or natural disaster such as *onslaught, tidal wave, flood, inundation, invasion, army, march, sneak and stealth* . Instead, use statistics and facts.

- > Words that seem innocuous to some people can have specific and deeply personal or offensive meanings to others.
- > When possible, avoid *special needs* and *special education* .
- > Many LGBTQ+ people now use the word *queer* as a point of empowerment to refer to a sexual orientation or gender identity. However, because of its origins as a slur, queer is not universally accepted among LGBTQ+ people, and its use tends to be more prevalent among younger generations.
- > The term people of color is acceptable when necessary in broad references to multiple races other than white: *We will hire more people of color* . OR *Nine playwrights of color collaborated on the script* .
- > Avoid using disability-related words lightly or in unrelated situations, and avoid direct quotations using such wording unless essential to the story. (Ex. *Calling a person demented, blind, lame* OR saying *the warning falls on deaf ears* OR *he turned a blind eye* OR *the awards show is schizophrenic* .
- > Refer to someone by age, race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental capabilities, history of alcohol or drug misuse, etc., only when relevant.
- > Use someone's age only when deemed relevant to the situation.
- > Generally, use ages for profiles, obituaries, significant career milestones and achievements unusual for the age. (Ex. *parent of two young children* OR *World War II veteran*)
- > Race is often an irrelevant factor and drawing unnecessary attention to someone's race or ethnicity can be interpreted as bigotry.
- > Identify people as *sexual orientation* only when relevant.
- > The term *disabilities and disabled* are generally embraced by disabled people and are acceptable when relevant.
- > Reference to political party affiliation is not necessary when a story has no link to politics. If in doubt, err on the side of including party affiliation.
- > Growing numbers of people, including some transgender, nonbinary, agender or gender-fluid people, use *they/them/their* as a gender-neutral singular personal pronoun.
- > As much as possible, AP also uses they/them/their as a way of accurately describing and representing a person who uses those pronouns for themselves.
- > Try to honor both your readers and your story subjects. As in all news writing, clarity is paramount.
- > Either write the sentence with no pronoun or explain if it isn't clear (ex. *Morales, who uses the pronoun they, said they will retire in June* .).

> Capitalize "Black" as an adjective (ex. Black people, Black culture, Black literature)