

ASSOCIATED PRESS 55TH ED. (AP) STYLE CHECKLIST

FORMATTING AND CITATIONS: FONT, MARGINS, AND PAPER STRUCTURE ARE NOT ADDRESSED IN AP

- Citations and source credit are written in the body of the piece instead of in footnotes or on a reference page
- When using an outside source, provide necessary information within the writing piece to identify it and show credibility (p. 500)
- When using data and data analysis, maintain a log containing source location such as URLs (p. 360)
- Writing must be clear, concise, objective, and consistent

PUNCTUATION GUIDE

- Omit the comma before the last item in a series (dogs, cats, rabbits and birds) unless the complexity of the sentence makes it difficult to understand (p. 336).
- Only one space after periods (p. 270)
- Dashes (-) separate abrupt changes in a sentence, replace bullet points, set off phrases with series, (He listed the items in detail—soup, celery, bread and butter) and signify the author of a quote (p. 338)
- Ellipses (...) are used to signify where part of a quote was deleted (p. 339). Example: “The snow was amazing... but it had to melt at some point.”

CAPITALIZATION

- Capitalize titles before a person’s name but not after (p. 5). Example: Governor Northam vs. Northam, the governor
- Lowercase the modifiers in titles: “department Chair Jerome Wienser” (p. 3)
- For addresses, capitalize the road type (Avenue, Road, Street) when there is no number attached and it is connected with a name, and lowercase when used with multiple names (p. 5-6). Example: Generic Street vs. Average and Normal avenues.

ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

- The first time a name is used in a paper should be spelled out and then the acronym can be used after. Example: 1st use *Crisis Pregnancy Center* 2nd use CPC.
- Abbreviate titles before names like Dr. unless alone in the sentence, use jr. & sr. instead of spelling them out, and abbreviate corporate descriptors after the company name such as *inc.* instead of *incorporated* (p. 1)
- Certain months and certain states are abbreviated (p. 1). Lists of these can be found on the Associated Press Stylebook website.
- In general, only abbreviate words that are easily recognizable in abbreviated form.

DATES, TIMES, AGES, LOCATIONS

- Ages use numerals and hyphens may be used (p. 212). Example: the 5-year-old boy reached for the toy.
- Concerning dates, do not use 1st, 2nd, etc. (p. 79).
- When referring to a date in the current year do not use the year. Otherwise, “set it off with commas: *Feb. 14, 2025*” (p. 330)
- Even though some months are abbreviated, spell them out when alone in a sentence or only with a year (p. 199). In the second case, do not use a comma to separate them.
- Generally, state names are spelled out unless paired with a city (with a few exceptions)
- Eight states are never abbreviated including Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah (p. 281).
- For addresses, only use abbreviations if they are paired with numbers (p. 6).

- When referencing time, use numerals and only use a.m. and p.m. when accompanied with the time such as 4:45 p.m. For exact hours, avoid :00 and instead use 3 p.m. “Noon” and “midnight” do not require numerals (p. 297).

NUMBERS

- Spell out the numbers one-nine and then use numerals for 10 and above (p. 212).
- If a number begins a sentence, spell it out unless it is a year` (p. 212 & 214).
- Use numerals if the number is part of a book or an address (p. 212).
- In distances and measurements, numerals are used (p. 212-213).
- When dealing with numbers in the millions and above, spell out the word million or billion etc. (p. 213). Example: The government spent \$5 million on the project.

PRACTICE NOW