Associated Press style is the base editorial style followed by communicators at The Ohio State University. This document outlines words and terms commonly used by communicators at Ohio State. It also notes instances in which the university breaks from AP style.

This guide is intended to supplement Ohio State’s main style website: apstylebook.com/osu. The website features the most up-to-date version of university style and you are encouraged to use it as the primary style resource whenever possible. If you have questions about any entries in this document, contact University Communications at style@osu.edu.

**Abbreviations**
Avoid abbreviations in running text except when part of official names. If the name represented by an abbreviation may be unknown to some readers, use the full name in the initial reference.

- **College of Arts and Sciences** (not Arts & Sciences)
- **August** (not Aug.)
- **Procter & Gamble** (official name)
- **Large Binocular Telescope** (LBT)

**Academic courses**
Capitalize the main words in titles of specific courses, but not names used in a general sense.

- **Economics 200**; **Science 111**; **economics courses**; **sociology**

Capitalize all nouns and adjectives referring to languages, countries and nationalities.

- a French course; an English course

**Academic programs**
The term “program” should not be capitalized unless used as an official part of a title.

- The Department of Psychology’s program offers specializations in clinical psychology, counseling psychology and developmental psychology.
- She’s a member of the Health Sciences Scholars Program.

**Academic units**
Capitalize the official names of academic units. Do not capitalize the name in informal reference.

- **Department of Art Education**; the art education department

**ACT**
Acceptable on first reference. Do not use periods.

**ADA compliance**
Publications (both print and Web) should be made available in alternative formats to students, faculty and staff with disabilities, and others with disabilities who are unable to read traditional print and online materials. If applicable, communications staff will discuss the ADA compliance process with clients upon initiation of design/editorial projects.

**Affirmative action/nondiscrimination statements**
The Ohio State University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity in its admission and employment programs. Use the following when applicable:

- **Short statement**: The Ohio State University is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity institution.

- **The long statement**: The Ohio State University is committed to building a diverse faculty and staff for employment and promotion to ensure the highest quality workforce, to reflect human diversity and to improve opportunities for minorities and women. The university embraces human diversity and is committed to equal employment opportunity, affirmative action and eliminating discrimination. Discrimination against any individual based upon protected status—defined as age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity or expression, genetic information, military status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation or veteran status—is prohibited.

For further information, contact the Office of Human Resources, 1590 N. High St., Suite 300, Columbus, OH 43201-2190 or 614-292-4164.

**African American**
No hyphen for the noun or adjective. Both African American and black are acceptable.

- African Americans; African American students

**Ages**
Use numerals.

**Agricultural Technical Institute (ATI)**
Abbreviate after first full reference. Do not use periods.

**Alma mater**
Do not italicize.

**Alumnus, alumni**
*Alumnus* is the singular, masculine form. For references to women, use *alumna* (singular) or *alumnae* (plural). *Alumni* is plural for a group of both men and women.

**American Indian**
*Native American* is also acceptable.
ampersand
Avoid using an ampersand unless it is part of an official title.
  College of Arts and Sciences
  Kuhn Honors & Scholars House

apostrophes
Make abbreviations plural by adding s.
  MBAs, RNs, BAs, W-2s, IDs

No apostrophe is needed for decades.
  1990s, 2010s

Asian American
No hyphen for the noun or the adjective.
  Asian Americans; Asian American students

autumn, autumn semester
Lowercase references to seasons and academic periods.

B
Big Ten
Ten is always spelled out in this usage.

black
Both black and African American are acceptable.

Blackwell, the
Use lowercase the in running text.
  They stayed at the Blackwell last night.

Board of Trustees
Capitalize the words Board and Trustees when referring to Ohio State’s Board of Trustees. Do not capitalize board or trustees when used alone or in second reference.

When referring to other boards and trustees, use lowercase.
  Ohio State’s Board of Trustees will meet today.
  His company’s board of trustees approved the measure. 
  All university board members agreed.

BuckID
No punctuation between letters.

bulleted lists
Keep punctuation for bulleted lists at a minimum. Begin each item with a lowercase letter. Omit periods after items unless one or more of the items is a complete sentence. If the list completes a sentence begun in an introductory element, the final period is also omitted unless the items in the list are separated by commas or semicolons.

  The required curriculum includes:
    • a calculus course
    • an advanced physics course
    • three chemistry courses

bulleted lists (continued)
Ordinarily, commas are not used following a series of items. If the vertically listed items are phrases—especially long phrases—that grammatically complete the sentence containing them, commas may, but need not, be used. If commas are used, the last item is followed by a period.

  In preparation, the student:
    • earned a high score on the ACT,
    • studied extensively on related subjects,
    • talked with professionals in the field.

Note: It is not necessary to include and before the last item in the list.

C
campus
Do not capitalize north campus, south campus, Newark campus, etc. Exception: West Campus is a formal name.

capitalization
Lowercase the word university when it is used alone in reference to Ohio State or another institution or when it is used in a generic sense.

  He wants to attend Ohio State, although the university is far from home.

A general rule is that official names are capitalized; unofficial, informal, shortened or generic names are not. This rule applies to names of offices, buildings, schools, departments, programs, centers, institutes, etc. Phrases such as the center, the institute, the college or the museum are not capitalized.

Names of seasons, academic periods and one-time events are generally not capitalized.
  autumn 2012; summer term; spring semester; orientation; spring break; commencement

chair
Use in all cases (not chairman, chairwoman or chairperson)

colleges
Capitalize the full, formal names of colleges, but lowercase shortened or informal versions.
  the College of Engineering; the engineering college; the college

course work
Two words.

curriculum/curricula
Curriculum is singular. Curricula and curriculums are plural.
dates
Spell out months and days of the week; use numerals for years. Use no punctuation if listing just the month and the year, but set the year off with commas if using the day of the month.
May 2014
a February 5, 2014, deadline
Join us Wednesday, October 17, for a celebration.

Decades may be referred to in any of the following ways.
(Note: No apostrophe is needed for 1990s, 2000s, etc.)
the 1990s; the ’90s; the nineties

decision making, decision-making
Two words as a noun, hyphenated as an adjective.
Decision making was not the committee’s strong point.
She found the decision-making process easy.

degrees
Capitalize the main words in the names of degrees when they are spelled out and capitalize abbreviations of degrees. Abbreviation of the degree name is acceptable on first reference. Do not use periods in abbreviations of degrees.
BA; BS; JD; MA; MBA; MS; PhD

Capitalization of names of degrees should match the registrar’s official degree list. If the official degree name contains the words “of Science,” the discipline is capitalized. (Refer to the Bachelor of Science in Chemistry, not the Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry or the Bachelor’s degree in Chemistry.) Similar rules apply to references made to master’s and doctoral degrees.

Do not capitalize academic degrees used in a general sense. Note that bachelor’s and master’s end in ’s.
an associate degree; a bachelor’s degree; a master’s degree; a doctoral degree; a doctorate

In references to degrees, the word “degree” is not capitalized.
She earned her Master of Music degree.

Make plural abbreviations of degrees by adding s.
MAs; PhDs; JDs

When they follow a person’s name, qualifiers such as PhD and MD are preceded by a comma. A second comma follows the qualifier in running text.
William Turner, PhD
The latest article published by William Turner, PhD, was his third in six months.

department names
Capitalize the full, formal names of departments, but lowercase shortened or informal versions.
the Department of Mechanical Engineering; the mechanical engineering department

email
No hyphen.

emeritus
Emeritus is the singular, masculine form. For references to women, use emerita (singular) or emeritae (plural). Emeriti may serve as the plural for a group that is composed of men only or both men and women. Emeritus is lowercase in all forms (unless used before a name as a formal title).
professor emerita of art; professors emeriti; Emeritus Professor John Smith

Fisher College of Business

foreign students
Use international students instead.

fraternal groups
Capitalize the names of fraternities and sororities but not the words “fraternity,” “sorority” and “chapter.”
Ohio State chapter of Phi Beta Kappa fraternity

fundraising
One word, noun or adjective.

G
grade point average (GPA)
Do not hyphenate. Do not use periods in abbreviation (GPA). Use all caps.

graduates with honors
Italicize but do not capitalize.
summa cum laude; magna cum laude; cum laude; magna cum laude with distinction

groundbreaking
One word, noun or adjective.
Health care

Two words, no hyphen, noun or adjective.
She has health care at the company where she works.
She has high health care costs.

Homepage

One word when referring to an Internet website.

Honors and Scholars Programs

Spell out and; no ampersand.

HTTP:// and www. in URLs

Delete http:// and www. in web addresses if not essential.

osu.edu
womensplace.osu.edu

International students

The phrase international students is preferable to foreign students.

Internet

Capitalize Internet. Also capitalize the Net or the Web when referring to the Internet. However, lowercase web when used with another word to form a compound noun or adjective: website, webpage, web address, etc.

Library

Do not use “main library.” Use Thompson Library.

Main campus

Do not use “main campus.” Use Columbus campus.

Majors and minors

Do not capitalize names of college studies, fields of study, curricula, majors, minors or programs unless a specific course is referred to or if using names of countries, nationalities, historical periods and languages.

She is majoring in political science.
He is a psychology major.
She changed her major from history to English.

Midwest, Midwestern

Uppercase references to the Midwest region of the United States, both noun and adjective.

Ohio State is located in the Midwest.
He is from a small Midwestern town.

Months

Months are not abbreviated in running text. A comma is not used for just the month and year.

September 2013

Multicultural, multidisciplinary

Single words.

Native American

American Indian is also acceptable.

Noncredit

One word.

Nonprofit

One word.

Nonsexist language

Avoid words and usage that reinforce sexist stereotypes.
Do not use he as an all-inclusive pronoun. He or she may be used, but the following solutions are preferable:
• Change the subject to the plural and use they, making sure there is verb/noun agreement.
• Change the singular third-person reference (he/she) to the second person (you).
• Use neutral words to replace personal pronouns (such as one or several).
• Repeat the noun or use a synonym.
• Revise the sentence to eliminate the pronoun altogether.

Nontraditional

One word.

Numbers

Spell out numbers one through nine. Use numerals for 10 or more and for fractions; spell out numbers that begin or end a sentence, or rewrite the sentence. (Exceptions: Big Ten; in special cases involving formal invitations, numbers 10 and above may be spelled out.)
numbers (continued)
In running text, when referring to dollar amounts in millions, use the numeral and million, rather than zeros.
$6 million (not $6,000,000)

off campus
Two words; hyphenated as an adjective before a noun.
Ed lives off campus.
Ed has an off-campus apartment.

Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (OARDC)
Abbreviate after the first full reference. Do not use periods.

Ohio State Scholars Program
Scholars Program is acceptable on second reference.

Ohio State University Extension
Note there is no “The” used for this title. Second references: Extension or OSU Extension.

Ohio State University Research Foundation (OSURF)
Note there is no “The” used for this title. Abbreviate after the first full reference. Do not use periods.

on campus
Two words; hyphenated as an adjective before a noun.
Sylvia works on campus.
Sylvia has an on-campus job.

online
One word.

ordinals
Write out first through ninth. Use numerals for 10th and higher.

percent
Spelling out percent is preferred, although % may be used if space is needed or in graphs or charts. Use numerals in front of percent, unless starting a sentence.
About 40 percent of the students responded.
Forty percent of the faculty attended.

phone numbers
Use hyphens to separate the sections of phone numbers. Do not use “1” before toll-free numbers.
614-292-3980; 800-555-1212

postdoctoral
One word. Postdoc is also acceptable.

president
Lowercase when not used as a formal title.
the president of Ohio State; when President Smith visited the classroom

President’s Club
Apostrophe before s; lowercase t when the is used: the President’s Club

rankings
Do not use a hyphen when referring to a top 10 or top 25 program.
She hopes to stay in the top 10 of her class.
Ohio State is a top 10 research university.

Recreation and Physical Activity Center (RPAC)
RPAC is acceptable on second reference.

regional campuses
The Ohio State University includes campuses in Columbus, Lima, Mansfield, Marion and Newark and the Agricultural Technical Institute and Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center in Wooster. In referring to regional campuses, the first reference in running text should be to the complete title.
The Ohio State University at Mansfield held a special student seminar.
Subsequent references: Ohio State Lima; Ohio State Mansfield; Ohio State Marion; Ohio State Newark; the Lima campus

SAT
Acceptable on first reference. Do not use periods.

Scarlet and Gray
Uppercase when referring to the Buckeyes. Lowercase when referring to the colors.
She always roots for the Scarlet and Gray, even though she lives in Texas now.
She always wears scarlet and gray to the games.

spring, spring semester
Lowercase references to seasons and academic periods.
**The Ohio State University**

After the first full reference to *The Ohio State University* (note the capital T), the following references are acceptable:

Ohio State; the university *always lowercase*

Do not use “OSU” to refer to The Ohio State University.

**The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center**

Please see the medical center editorial style guide.

**time**

Use numerals in all cases and omit the zeros for on-the-hour times. Use periods for a.m. and p.m. To avoid confusion, use noon and midnight instead of 12 p.m. and 12 a.m.

- 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- 1-3 p.m.
- 8 a.m. to noon

**titles**

Capitalize titles when they immediately precede a personal name. Titles following a personal name or used alone in place of a name are lowercase. Capitalize titles used in lists if they appear line for line as in an address.

*Professor George Shaw*
*George Shaw, professor,*
*George Shaw is a professor.*

**United States, U.S.**

Use *United States* as the proper noun, *U.S.* as the adjective.

*He was born in the United States.*
*He is a U.S. citizen.*

**university**

Lowercase when referring to Ohio State, unless used as part of the full name of the institution.

**versus**

Use *v.* when abbreviating “versus.”

*He’s the prosecutor in Smith *v.* Jones.*
*This Saturday, it’s the Buckeyes *v.* the Hawkeyes.*

**Wexner Center for the Arts**

Not “…of the Arts”

**World Wide Web**

Three words, no hyphens, all initial caps. Second reference, *the Web* or *the Net.*

**year in school**

Do not capitalize the words *freshman, sophomore, junior, senior* or *graduate* when they refer to the year in which a course is to be taken or to the classification of the student.

*Tom thinks his graduate courses are easier than those he took as a senior.*

**zip code**

Do not use a comma to separate a state abbreviation from the zip code in addresses.

*Columbus, OH 43210*