

AEC3033 AP Style Quick Check

➤ Abbreviations:

- Organizations may be abbreviated on second reference, *without parentheses* on first reference. (The University of Florida is a land-grant university. Students at UF will find many majors in the agricultural and life sciences from which to choose.)
Avoid unfamiliar acronyms and abbreviations.
- In **complete** street addresses, abbreviate St., Ave., Blvd. There are no abbreviations without the street number: We live at 123 Easy St. We live on Easy Street.
- **Dates:** Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec. Spell out the rest.
- United States is U.S. *when used as an adjective*. It may be abbreviated *on second reference* when used as a noun.
- Abbreviate most states in the U.S. *when used with a city*: Ala. (Alabama), Ariz. (Arizona), Ark. (Arkansas), Calif. (California), Colo. (Colorado), Conn. (Connecticut), Del. (Delaware), Fla. (Florida), Ga. (Georgia), Ill. (Illinois), Ind. (Indiana), Kan. (Kansas), Ky. (Kentucky), La. (Louisiana), Md. (Maryland), Mass. (Massachusetts), Mich. (Michigan), Minn. (Minnesota), Miss. (Mississippi), Mo. (Missouri), Mont. (Montana), Neb. (Nebraska), Nev. (Nevada), N.H. (New Hampshire), N.J. (New Jersey), N.M. (New Mexico), N.Y. (New York), N.C. (North Carolina), N.D. (North Dakota), Okla. (Oklahoma), Ore. (Oregon), Pa. (Pennsylvania), R.I. (Rhode Island), S.C. (South Carolina), S.D. (South Dakota), Tenn. (Tennessee), Vt. (Vermont), Va. (Virginia), Wash. (Washington), W. Va. (West Virginia), Wis. (Wisconsin), Wyo. (Wyoming). **All others**, such as Maine and Alaska, are not abbreviated.

➤ Capitalization:

- Capitalize names of holidays, historic events, (Thanksgiving, D-Day), but not seasons (fall, autumn, winter, spring, summer).
- Capitalize regions (West Coast, South Florida), but not directions (north, south).
- Capitalize the proper names of nationalities, peoples, races and tribes (Indian, Chinese, Cherokee).
- Capitalize and place quotation marks around names of books, plays, poems, songs, lectures or speech titles, hymns, movies, television programs when the full name is used (“Call of the Wild”; “Game of Thrones”).

➤ Numbers:

- Generally, spell out numbers under 10 (one, two...), including ordinals (first, second). Use figures for 10 and above.
- Spell out any number that is the *first word of the sentence* (Twenty-four black birds flew away.).
- Ages are always expressed in numerals (Mary is 5. John Smith, 6, will go to school today.)
- The words million and billion may be used with round numbers (10 billion) and rounded off: 2.75 million for 2,752,123.
- Use commas in numbers with four or more digits, except in years and street addresses (We have 1,500 students.).
- Don’t use “th,” “rd” or “nd” in dates (*not* Sept. 30th, 2012, but Sept. 30, 2012).
- Use numerals in dimensions: (5-foot-8.); money: (\$2; \$2.5 million); percentages: (5 percent) and weights (4 pounds).
- Generally, spell out fractions (We have a two-thirds majority.)

➤ Punctuation:

- Hyphens are used in adjective phrases (an up-to-date sylebook), but not in sequences with an adverb ending in “ly” (a seriously flawed plan). Use with prefix “ex”: ex-president.
- Omit last comma in a series, just before the conjunction: We brought an apple, an orange and a banana.
- Omit commas in names before Roman numerals (John Smith IV) and before Jr. and Sr.
- Commas and periods go *inside* the last quotation mark; colons and semicolons *outside*. Question marks depend on whether the quote is a question or a statement inside of a question. “I will come with you,” he said. Mary said, “I will, too.” “Will you come, too?” she asked. Was it Mary who was saying, “I will, too?”
- Add only the apostrophe—not an s—with possessive words ending in s. Apostrophes are used for omitted figures (class of ’76) and plurals of single letters (He got four A’s and two B’s.) TAs does not need an apostrophe.
- **Essential (restrictive) clauses, nonessential (nonrestrictive) clauses:** The *essential clause* cannot be eliminated without changing the meaning of the sentence. It so *restricts* the meaning that its absence would lead to a substantially different interpretation of what the writer meant. It CANNOT be set off from the rest of the sentence by (a) comma(s). (The book which offers examples helps us learn.) **That** is the preferred pronoun to introduce essential clauses that refer to an object or animal without a name. (The book that offers examples helps us learn.) The *nonessential clause* can be eliminated without altering the basic meaning of the sentence. It does not *restrict* the meaning so significantly that its absence would radically alter the writer’s meaning. It MUST be set off by (a) comma(s). (The book AP Style, which offers examples, helps us learn.) **Which** is the only acceptable pronoun to introduce a nonessential clause that refers to an object or an animal without a name.

➤ Names and Titles:

- Generally use first name, middle initial and last name unless both first and middle name are commonly used.
- Use full identification in first reference. In second reference, use *last name only* (no courtesy title, e.g., Mr., Dr., unless not using them would cause confusion, such as when a married couple are quoted).
- Proper titles are capitalized before a person’s name. Only a few are abbreviated.
- Titles following a person’s name or standing alone in the text are generally spelled out and are *not capitalized*.

➤ Time

- There is no yesterday or tomorrow in AP Style. Only today. Name the day if the event falls within the week. Use the date if the event falls before or after the current week. Avoid using the day of week and the date together.
- Use a colon in clock time (2:15) except for top of the hour (1 p.m.), and use 12-hour clock periods a.m. and p.m. in lower case.