

AP Style Guide Common Usage

A more complete guide can be downloaded at
www.sandiego.edu/marketing/identity-writing.php.

Abbreviations

1. **Academic degrees.** Use the abbreviation Dr. only before the name of a person who holds a medical degree. Do not use the title Dr. before the names of people who hold other doctorate degrees or honorary doctorate degrees. In those cases, the degrees should be listed after the person's name. (Jane Smith, PhD) Do not use periods in the abbreviations of degrees. (BA, MA, JD, LL.M., Ph.D., Ed.D) Set off academic abbreviations with commas when used in the middle of a sentence. (Jane Smith, JD, was the keynote speaker.)
2. **Ampersand (&).** The ampersand may only be used in the title of the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice. Do not abbreviate and in any other context.
3. **Building names.** Do not abbreviate any campus building names except Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice (IPJ). You may abbreviate this when referencing it for a second time in a paragraph.
4. **Months.** Never abbreviate months when they do not immediately precede a date. (We got married in September last year.) When the name of a month immediately precedes a date, abbreviate it, but only if the month's name is six letters or longer. (We met Aug. 6 last year and got married March 5.)
5. **Time.** Use a.m. or p.m. Lowercase with periods. Do not use :00 for hour (10 a.m., not 10:00 a.m.) Avoid redundancies such as 10 a.m. in the morning.
6. **Web addresses.** Leave out the http:// for most applications and just use www.

Capitalizing

Avoid random capitalization. Do not capitalize for emphasis. Do not use exclamation points.

1. **In a headline.** Capitalize all words in a title or headline except articles (a, an, the) and prepositions (of, on, to, at, in). Do not use all caps. (Students Engage in Community Outreach)
2. **Of a title.** Capitalize only when they precede a name. (Provost John Smith)
Lowercase in all other instances. (John Smith, provost of the university)
3. **Names.** Proper names should always be capitalized. Capitalize university when it is part of a proper name. (University of San Diego) Lowercase in all other references (There are more than 7,000 students at the university.) Lowercase school when referring to more than one of the university's schools or when referencing anything other than the formal names of the schools. (Students applied to the schools of law and business. The student applied to the law school, the business school and the nursing school. The student will attend the School of Business Administration.) Formal name of a degree is capitalized. (John Smith received a Bachelor of Science in chemistry.)
4. **Church.** Capitalize as part of a formal name of a building, a congregation or a denomination. (St. Mary's Church, The Roman Catholic Church) Lowercase in phrases where church is used in an institutional sense. (The church teaches that God is love.)
5. **Religious titles.** Treat as all titles: spell out and capitalize in front of name. (Father John Smith, Sister Anne Smith, Monsignor John Smith, Brother John Smith)
Exception is Reverend, which is abbreviated Rev. and always preceded by the. (The officiate was the Rev. John Smith.)

Quotation Marks and Italics

1. **Book and magazine titles.** Italicize without quotes.
2. **Movie titles.** Put quotations around title. Do not italicize.