

# AP Style

Foundations of Journalism

Emerson College

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# AP Style

- We will use AP Style for this course.
- When in doubt, refer to your AP Stylebook.
- Learn AP Style so that it becomes second nature.
- Covers almost any/everything you can imagine.

# AP Style

- AP = Associated Press.
- Considered the Bible of journalism. The industry standard.
- Updated annually.
  - Usually minor changes and editions.

# AP Style

- Comes from the Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law.
- Style and usage guide used by newspapers and in the news industry in the United States. It is the basis for virtually every news publication's style – when to capitalize, use numerals, preferred spellings and abbreviation.
- Some papers/sites have their own additional style guides. But the basis for those is going to be AP.

# AP Style

- AP Style trumps all other styles/rules you may have learned. (APA, MLA, Elements of Style, etc.)
- Your individual outlets style trumps AP Style.
  - Example: NY Times uses titles (Mr., Mrs., Dr, etc.). Most outlets do not.

# Numbers

- Spell out one through nine. Use numerals for numbers 10 and up.

# Number Exceptions

- Dates
  - April 2, Sept. 9
- Numbers with decimal points
  - 4.2, 6.25
- Money
  - \$4.
- Statistics
  - Bush rushed for 3 yards.

# Number Exceptions

- Percent
  - 9 percent (spell out the word percent.)
- Proportions
  - Every year, 7 out of 10 children get the flu.
- Time
  - 1 p.m.



# Numbers

- Also, use figures for house numerals, degrees of temperature, votes, scores, speeds, time of races, dimensions and serial numbers.
- Always spell out numbers when they start a sentence.
  - Exception: Years are always a numeral.
    - Sixteen years ago, she bought her house.
    - 1999 was a great year.

# AP Style

- States
  - AP has specific abbreviations for 42 states.
    - Spell out: Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Utah, Texas.

# AP Style

- Do not capitalize a.m. or p.m.
- Full name on first reference. Last name thereafter.
- Spell out acronyms on first reference.

# Datelines

- Datelines indicates the city from where a story was filed.
  - Reporter needs to have been in that city for a dateline.
  - All caps, followed by dash.
- Some cities can stand alone. Others need state or country.
  - See AP Stylebook for list
- Stories filed within the city an outlets serves do not get a dateline.
  - Suburbs within the coverage may/may not get a dateline.
    - If they do get a dateline, a state is not necessary.

# Datelines

- Stories with information reported from all over do not usually have a dateline.
- Features do not traditionally have a dateline.

# Titles

- Abbreviate Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec.
  - Spell out all other months.
- Do not abbreviate days of the week.
- Do not use “yesterday” or “tomorrow.” So outlets will use “today,” but that is becoming less common.
  - Instead say, “on Tuesday.”

# Composition Titles

- Put movies, books, songs, etc. in quotation marks.
  - He read “Catcher in the Rye.”
  - Exceptions: Major religious texts (i.e. Bible, Quran) and reference books.
- Capitalize principal words as well as prepositions more than four letters.
  - For Whom the Bell Tolls, Curious George Goes to the Zoo

# Titles

- No comma before or after Jr.
- Most titles are capitalized only before a name and lowercase on other reference.
  - Includes president, pope, speaker
- See AP Stylebook for how to refer to senators, congressmen and numerous other titles.



# College

- Spell out university's full name on first reference.
- Class years are lowercase
  - freshman, sophomores
- Only proper nouns that are majors are capitalized
  - English, French, American history, journalism

# Proper Spelling

- Some words have multiple spellings, AP has a preferred version.
  - Example: AP prefers Quran over Koran.

# **When in doubt...**

- Always refer to your AP Stylebook
- Do a Web search to see what AP uses.