

# Top 20 Style Tips

This list answers the style questions most frequently asked by UB communicators. We suggest keeping a copy on your desk as a handy reference guide. For all other style questions, use the resources listed in the right-hand column below, in order from top to bottom.

## 1 academic degrees

Lowercase both the degree and the subject of the degree. *She earned a bachelor's degree in pharmacy.* However, when the subject of the degree is a proper noun, it should be uppercase: *He earned a bachelor's degree in English.*

When abbreviating degrees, do not use punctuation: BS, EdM, MBA, PhD.

## 2 addresses

When giving a numbered address, use the abbreviations Ave., Blvd. and St., and spell out all other similar words such as Drive and Circle. When only a street name is given, spell out all words: *The hospital is at 1315 Jefferson Ave., at the corner of Jefferson Avenue and East Utica Street.* North, East, South and West should be abbreviated as N., E., S. and W. only when a numbered address is given: *UB's family medicine department has offices at 132 W. Main St. in Cuba, N.Y.* For address numbers, use figures: *The UB Anderson Gallery is at 1 Martha Jackson Place.* Spell out First through Ninth when used as street names, but use figures for 10th Street, 11th Avenue and above.

Do not spell out state names in body copy; use the state abbreviation list (NOT the postal code abbreviations) in the Custom Stylebook entry "state names."

## 3 capitalization

Avoid unnecessary capitalization. Common nouns such as university and president should be capitalized only when used as part of a full name for a person, place or thing: *The University at Buffalo is a research institution. The university is among the nation's top research institutions.*

## 4 cellphone

Not cell phone. Similarly, smartphone.

### RESOURCES:

AP Stylebook,  
customized for UB:

[apstylebook.com/  
buffalo](http://apstylebook.com/buffalo)

Backup dictionary:

For spelling, style and usage questions not specifically addressed in its stylebook, AP refers users to Webster's New World College Dictionary, Fifth Edition.

If you don't have access to the print edition, you may use Webster's online version:

[merriam-webster.com](http://merriam-webster.com)

### QUESTIONS?

For additional guidance, please contact:

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- 5 composition and publication titles** Use roman type and double quotation marks for the titles of books, films, musical compositions, paintings, dissertations, video games, etc. See AP Stylebook for exceptions. Render titles as they appear in the original composition, even if they deviate from our headline style.
- The names of newspapers, magazines and periodicals should be cited in copy as they appear on their own banners. *The article appeared in The New York Times.* But: *The article appeared in the Los Angeles Times.*
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- 6 courtesy titles** In general, do not use courtesy titles (e.g., Dr.) except in direct quotes.
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- 7 days, weeks, months** Always use Arabic figures, without st, nd, rd or th. For example: June 1, not June 1st.
- Do not abbreviate days of the week, except when needed in a tabular format.
- When a month is included as part of a specific date, use Jan., Feb., March, April, May, June, July, Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec. *María Garcia's birthday is Sept. 12, 1985.* Do not abbreviate the names of any months when only a month and year are given: *The research project began in January 2000 and ended in November 2003.*
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- 8 email** Do not hyphenate. However, a hyphen should be used with e-book, e-business and e-commerce.
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- 9 em dashes** No spaces around em dashes in body copy.
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- 10 health care** Two words, no hyphen, all uses. OK to use healthcare, however, if this is part of an organization's formal title; for example, VA Western New York Healthcare System.
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- 11 internet** Lowercase. *He surfed the internet.*
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- 12 names** Use first and last name on first reference and last name only on second reference.
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- 13 numbers** When referring to common objects, spell out one through nine and use figures for 10 and above: *James Nowak has two computers, 10 notebooks and 11 pens on his desk.* However, use figures when referring to percentages, dimensions and children's ages. (See AP Stylebook for additional exceptions.)
- Numbers at the start of a sentence should always be spelled out: *Sixty-four students signed up for the class.*
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- 14 school and department titles** Uppercase the formal name of UB's schools, colleges and departments: *She attends the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences.* Lowercase when used informally: *She attends the engineering school.* However, when a proper noun is used, it should be capitalized in all uses: *The English department has productive scholars.*
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- 15 serial commas** Do not put a comma before the conjunction in a simple series: *UB's researchers are hardworking, innovative and creative.* Use a comma before the conjunction in a complex series: *In considering Aisha Kumar for the job of research assistant, they wondered if Kumar had enough research experience to complete required duties, if she was able to work for more than one semester, and if she was enthusiastic about the project itself.*
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- 16 telephone numbers** Use figures with hyphens, without parentheses: 716-555-2000.
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**17 times**

With the exception of noon and midnight, use figures and lowercase a.m. and p.m. *The class began at noon and ended at 1 p.m. Haruto Sato skipped the class because he worked from 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.*

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**18 titles**

Only formal titles that precede a name are capitalized, and prepositions should be lowercase in all instances: *Vice President of Student Affairs Jane Olatunji wears glasses.* But: *Jane Olatunji, vice president of student affairs, wears glasses.*

UB Distinguished Professor, SUNY Distinguished Professor, SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor and SUNY Distinguished Service Professor are always capitalized, as are endowed professorships, such as the Albert and Elizabeth Rekate Professor of Medicine.

Commonly used titles that are abbreviated when they precede a name include Gov., Lt. Gov., Rep. and Sen. *Gov. Emma Tremblay will be the keynote speaker.*

For more information on titles, see the AP Stylebook entry on titles and the Custom Stylebook entry on SUNY Distinguished Professor.

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**19 URLs**

Don't include <https://www> unless it is essential for calling up the website. Usually the simple web address will suffice, for example, [buffalo.edu](http://buffalo.edu).

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**20 website**

One word, not capitalized. Also webcam, webcast, webmaster, webpage, webfeed, the web.

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