

# Vanderbilt University

## STYLE GUIDE



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Division of Public Affairs

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## About this style guide

This publication provides guidelines for addressing issues of grammar and style that are likely to be encountered while producing publications for Vanderbilt. The first section is an alphabetical listing of words and phrases with guidelines for usage, including Vanderbilt-specific terms; a punctuation guide follows.

These guidelines are for general use and are intended to be a resource especially for those who communicate with external and internal audiences about the university. Students and faculty doing academic writing would likely be better served by consulting the style guides specific to their disciplines or more general grammar and style guides.

The guidelines presented here are based in part on two sources: *The Associated Press Stylebook* and the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Both are widely followed standards for questions of style among writers and publishers, with the *AP Stylebook* representing a journalistic approach and *CMS* a more traditional one. As long as consistency and clarity are maintained, either style is acceptable. Several listings in this guide provide both a news-style and non-news-style recommendation. Writers and editors should use their own judgment to determine what style is appropriate for their publication, as well as to decide when deviating from the guidelines makes more sense than following them. We recognize that different types of publications and different audiences may require different approaches. An invitation has different stylistic requirements than does an article for a newspaper. The goal is for our publications, whether an event schedule or a magazine feature article, to communicate effectively.

## Useful links

[Re:VU Quick Facts about Vanderbilt](#)

[VU Administration Organizational Chart: Officers of the Board, General Officers, Deans](#)

[Equal Opportunity / Affirmative Action statement](#)

[List of interdisciplinary centers, institutes and initiatives](#)

Guidelines for use of the Vanderbilt logo and wordmark

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## Style guide

### A-B

**academic year** — *News Style*: Use a hyphen when writing out an academic year.

Example, *News Style*:

**Online applications are available for the 2016-17 academic year.**

*Non-news Style* offers the option of either a slash (a.k.a. solidus) or an en dash to designate a period that extends over part of two successive calendar years.

Example, *Non-news Style*:

**The 2016/2017 catalog is available online.**

**acreage** — For publications, the official acreage for the Vanderbilt campus is 330 acres.

**addresses** — *News Style*: Use the abbreviations Ave., Blvd. and St. only with a numbered address:

**1600 Pennsylvania Ave.** Spell out and capitalize when part of a formal street name without a number:

**Pennsylvania Avenue.** Lowercase and spell out when used alone or with more than one street name:

**Massachusetts and Pennsylvania avenues.** All similar words (alley, drive, road, terrace, etc.) are always spelled out. Always use figures for an address number: **9 Morningside Circle.** Spell out and capitalize First through Ninth when used as street names; use figures with two digits for 10th and above: **7 Fifth Ave., 110 21st Ave. N.**

*Non-news Style*: In running text, it is preferable not to abbreviate parts of an address. Spell out such words as *avenue*, *boulevard*, and *street*. Spell out numbered street names of one hundred or less. **Thirty-sixth Street. 1212 Fifth Avenue. U.S. Route 41.** One instance where abbreviations are recommended: Use the abbreviations NW, NE, SE, and SW in city addresses after the street name.

See also **streets**.

**adviser** — Not *advisor*.

**affect, effect** — *Affect*, as a verb, means to influence: **The game will affect the standings.** *Affect*, as a noun, is best avoided. *Effect*, as a verb, means to cause: **He will effect many changes in the company.** *Effect*, as a noun, means result: **The effect was overwhelming. It was a law of little effect.**

**African American** — Preferred term. Do not hyphenate as a noun or an adjective. **African American students.** *Black* may also be used (lowercase unless the name of a specific place or organization). Context may determine usage.

Example:

**The Black Cultural Center is a base for whites as well as blacks.**

**Programming at the Bishop Joseph Johnson Black Cultural Center spans the interests and concerns of African Americans.**

See also **black**.

**ages** — *News Style*: Use figures. When used as a modifier or a noun, use hyphens: **A 5-year-old boy received the award. The camp is for 3-year-olds. The boy is 5 years old. The boy, 7, has a sister, 10.** Applies also to inanimate objects, animals, etc. **The 8-year-old building is scheduled for demolition this week.**

*Non-news Style*: Spell out according to the general rule for numbers, i.e., spell out numbers from one to one hundred. **The property is held by a fifty-nine-year-old man. The boy is five years old.**

See also **numbers**.

**all right** — Never *alright*.

**Alumni Association** — Capitalize when referring specifically to the Vanderbilt Alumni Association. Use the full, formal name *Vanderbilt Alumni Association* on first reference; the *Alumni Association* (retaining capitalization) is acceptable on subsequent references.

**alumnus** — *Alumnus* refers to a man; plural is *alumni*. *Alumna* refers to a woman; plural is *alumnae*. Use *alumni* when referring to a group of men and women. Note that individuals who attended Vanderbilt but did not complete a degree should not be referred to as alumni. Correct references are “former student” or, for example, “John Doe, who attended Vanderbilt from 1970 to 1972 ...”

*Exception*: Vanderbilt Divinity School uses *alumni/ae* for the plural.

**a.m., p.m.** — Lowercase, with periods. Use figures to designate time using a.m. and p.m.: **4 p.m.** For noon and midnight, use the words *noon* and *midnight* without the figure 12.

Wrong: Avoid redundancy such as *10 a.m. this morning*.

See also **time**.

**annual** — Do not use the phrase *first annual*. An event cannot be described as annual until it has been held at least two successive years. In the first year of an event, describe it as the first, not first annual. Alternatively, the first year of an event may be described as inaugural. The designation of an event’s year (second annual, etc.) should not be capitalized as part of its title in running text.

Wrong: The first annual Alumni Cheerleading Reunion will be held this year during homecoming weekend.

Right: **The first Alumni Cheerleading Reunion will be held this year during homecoming weekend.**

Right: **The sixth annual Flulapalooza flu vaccination event will take place in the fall.**

Right: **Leonard Garment spoke at the inaugural Curb Lecture.**

Right: **The seventh annual Soiree at Sarratt provided students with the opportunity to connect with professionals in various industries and occupations.**

**antenna, -ae, -as** — Use *antennae* as plural unless referring to a metal device used for transmitting and receiving radio waves, in which case *antennas* is an acceptable plural.

**app** — Short for *application*. *App* is acceptable on first reference. An app is a program that runs inside another service. Many cellphones allow applications to be downloaded to expand their functions. Names of apps are capitalized without quotation marks or italics.

**arboretum** — A place where trees and shrubs are cultivated for scientific, ornamental and educational purposes. Since 1988, Vanderbilt’s campus has been recognized as an arboretum by the American Public Gardens Association (formerly American Society of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta), and the university maintains APGA membership. Vanderbilt follows APGA guidelines for arboretum status: maintaining plant records; providing labels, maps or other interpretive materials; opening to the public at least part time; serving an aesthetic, educational and research purpose; and maintaining at least one professional staff member.

It is correct to refer to the Vanderbilt campus as an arboretum or a registered arboretum. Or write, for example: Vanderbilt’s campus is an arboretum officially recognized by the American Public Gardens Association since 1988.

Because there is no official certifying body for arboreta, do not use the phrase “official national arboretum” or “certified arboretum” to describe the campus.

**archaeology** — This is the preferred spelling.

**Arts and Science, College of** — On second reference can use *Arts and Science* or *the college* (if only one college is mentioned). Do not use the ampersand. Avoid *A&S*, although acceptable in headlines.

Note: *Science* is singular. Vanderbilt does not have a College of Arts and Sciences.

Example:

**She is a student in Arts and Science.**

**Asian American** — Preferred term. Do not hyphenate as a noun or an adjective.

Example:

**Fifty Asian American students attended the meeting.**

**Association of Vanderbilt Black Alumni** — ABVA is acceptable on second or subsequent references.

**athletics** — Use Department of Student Athletics, Vanderbilt athletics, or student athletics, depending on the context. The department is under the auspices of the vice chancellor for athletics and university affairs and athletics director.

*Exception:* Athletics Marketing uses *Vanderbilt Athletics*.

Example:

**David Williams provides executive leadership to Vanderbilt athletics.**

See also **coach** and **team**.

**award** — Capitalize when part of the official name of the award.

Example:

**The Rev. Emilie M. Townes, dean of the Vanderbilt University Divinity School, received the 2015 Pacesetter Award from the American Association of Blacks in Higher Education.**

**back up** (v.), **backup** (n. and adj.)

Example:

**Users should back up their files at the end of each day. The backup files may come in handy, so keep backups in a convenient location.**

**Barnes & Noble at Vanderbilt** — Note the use of the ampersand.

**best-seller**

**Bible/bible** — Uppercase when referring to the religious text. However, lowercase when used as a figure of speech. Do not italicize.

Example

***The Harvard Medical Encyclopedia* is the hypochondriac's bible.**

**The course will discuss the Bible as literature.**

**biblical** — Lowercase in all instances.

**Bishop Joseph Johnson Black Cultural Center** — Can use *Black Cultural Center* on second reference. Avoid using the acronym *BCC* or *BJJBCC*.

Example:

**The director of the Bishop Joseph Johnson Black Cultural Center is faculty head of house for Gillette House. His work with the Black Cultural Center is one facet of his life at Vanderbilt that he brings to his role as mentor for first-year students.**

**Bishops Common** — Note there is no apostrophe.

**black** — Lowercase unless the name of a specific place or organization.

Example:

**the spectrum of black leadership, the Black Student Association.**

**Black Cultural Center** — Acceptable for second reference to **Bishop Joseph Johnson Black Cultural Center**.

**Black Graduates Recognition Ceremony** — No apostrophe after *Graduates*.

**Blair School of Music** — Can use *Blair* or *the Blair School* on second reference.



**blog** — (v. and n.) Lowercase. Italicize the title of a named blog. Place blog entries within quotation marks.

**Board of Trust** — Always uppercase when referring to Vanderbilt’s Board of Trust or the full name of any other named board. On second reference, lowercase “the board.” Also lowercase when referring to it as “the Vanderbilt board.”

Example:

**The Vanderbilt financial report will be ready for next week’s Board of Trust meeting.**

**The board meets on Tuesday.**

**Mark Wait, dean of the Blair School, serves on the Nashville Symphony Board of Directors.**

[Link to a list of Vanderbilt Board of Trust members](#)

**bookstore** — For first reference, use *Barnes & Noble at Vanderbilt*. For second and subsequent references, ok to use “the bookstore,” “the Vanderbilt bookstore,” “the campus bookstore.”

**Braeburn** — Instead use *the Vanderbilt University Residence*.

See also **Vanderbilt University Residence**.

**building** — In general lowercase: **the chemistry building**. Uppercase when it is the formal name of the building: **the Baker Building**.

## C-D

**campus** — Lowercase: **The lecture is in Featheringill Hall on the Vanderbilt campus.**

**campuswide** — One word, no hyphen. Compounds ending in *wide* are not hyphenated unless they are long and cumbersome.

Example:

**statewide referendum, worldwide pandemic, countywide office; but university-wide institute.**

**cellphone, smartphone** — One word, lowercase.

**center** — Capitalize when part of the full, formal name.

Example: **The Margaret Cuninggim Women’s Center was founded in 1978.**

On second reference, capitalize a shortened version of the name.

Example: **Programs provided by the Women’s Center are described on their website.**

Never capitalize when the word is used alone.

Example: **The center invites participation by the entire campus community.**

**Central Library** — Use for references to this unit of the Heard Library system, located at the east end of Library Lawn. This building also houses Divinity Library and Special Collections and University Archives. Use *Heard Library*, *Heard Library system*, or *Vanderbilt Libraries* for references to the entire library system, which includes 10 units.

See also **Heard Library**, **Jean and Alexander Heard Library**, and **Vanderbilt Libraries**.

**century** — Lowercase: **the first century**. See **numbers** for further guidance.

**chair** — Preferred title for the presiding officer of a department or committee. Avoid *chairperson*.

**chancellor** — For news purposes, lowercase unless preceding a name.

Example:

**The meeting provided a chance for students to meet Chancellor Zeppos and to discuss the chancellor's vision for the university.**

See also **emeritus**.

**Children's Hospital** — Preferred second reference for **Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt**. Always use the full name on maps.

**civil rights, civil rights movement** — Lowercase.

**class** — Capitalize when referring to a specific class: **the Class of '94**. Note: Use an apostrophe, not a single quotation mark.

**co-** — Retain the hyphen when forming nouns, adjectives and verbs that indicate occupation or status: **co-chair**, **co-author**, **co-sponsor**, **co-founder**, **co-captain**. Use no hyphen in other combinations: coeducation, coexist. Note: cooperate, coordinate and related words are exceptions to the rule that a hyphen is used if a prefix ends in a vowel and the word that follows begins with the same vowel.

**coach, head coach** — Generally, follow the rule for academic titles: Coach Derek Mason; Derek Mason, head football coach.

Example:

**According to football coach Derek Mason, the team is ready for Saturday's game.**

**When Coach Mason speaks, his players listen.**

**The defensive end has informed Vanderbilt coach Derek Mason of his decision.**

**College Halls at Vanderbilt** — *College Halls* okay on second reference.

Example:

**College Halls at Vanderbilt is the university's long-term plan to provide a system of residential community life for all undergraduates.**

**The Martha Rivers Ingram Commons at Vanderbilt was the first phase of College Halls. The second phase, opened in fall 2014, comprises Warren College, Moore College and Kissam Center.**

Each college, led by a faculty director in residence, will house about 330 upperclass students and will be divided into two halls led by a graduate fellow.

See also **Warren and Moore colleges**.

**College of Arts and Science** — On second reference can use *Arts and Science* or *the college* (if only one college is mentioned). Do not use the ampersand. Avoid *A&S*, although acceptable in headlines.

Note: *Science* is singular. Vanderbilt does not have a College of Arts and Sciences.

**Commencement** — Capitalize when referring to the Vanderbilt event. Lowercase general references.

Example:

**The Vanderbilt Commencement ceremony will be streamed live.**

**A university's commencement is a special opportunity.**

**Commons** — See **Martha Rivers Ingram Commons at Vanderbilt**.

**The Commons Center** — Note the capitalization of "The."

Example:

**Vanderbilt received recognition for The Commons Center's environmentally friendly construction from the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System.**

**comprise** — *Comprise* means to contain, to include all, to consist of. The whole comprises the parts. Never say "is comprised of." One option to eliminate that incorrect phrase is to replace it with "is composed of."

Wrong: Vanderbilt is comprised of 10 schools.

Right: **Vanderbilt comprises 10 schools.**

Right: **The United States comprises 50 states.**

**continual, continuous** — *Continual* means habitual, frequently recurring. *Continuous* means ongoing, without interruption.

**course titles** — Capitalize official course titles in running text. No italics or quotation marks are necessary.

Example:

**Frank was hoping to get into a new management course, Online Consumer Behavior.**

When listing a course number with the departmental abbreviation, put a space between the abbreviation, the course number and the course name.

Example:

**ME 2190 Dynamics.**

If listing the department name with the course number, capitalize the department name.

Example:

**Mechanical Engineering 2190 Dynamics.**

**course work** — Two words.

**courtesy titles** — Never use courtesy titles such as Mr., Mrs., Ms., etc. Use Dr. only when the person is a medical doctor and use only on first reference.

**credit hours** — Use numerals to refer to credit hours.

Example:

**She is enrolled in a 3 credit hour course.** (Note that no hyphens are used.)

**cum laude** — No italic.

**curriculum vitae** — No italic; the plural is **curricula vitae**. Also referred to as CV; plural: CVs.

Example:

**He requested a curriculum vitae from each applicant and within a week had received three curricula vitae via email. He marked each CV with the appropriate code and put them all in a file labeled CVs.**

**dates** — Always use Arabic figures, without st, nd, rd or th.

When a phrase refers to a month, day and year, commas are required before and after the year.

Example:

**He was born May 25, 1950, in Wichita.**

When including a day of the week with the date, use a comma after the day and after the date.

Example:

**The reception will be Thursday, Sept. 10, at 5 p.m.**

When a phrase refers to a date but not a year, then do not use a comma with the date.

Example:

**The exhibit will open Feb. 15 at the Fine Arts Gallery.**

When referring to just the month and year, then do not use a comma.

Example: **The program began in May 1999 with 10 participants.**

When writing a span of dates, do not combine a preposition with a hyphen.

Wrong: Spring break will be from March 7-14.

Right: **Spring break will be March 7-14.**

Right: **Spring break will be from March 7 through March 14.**

For more formal uses, and for *Non-news Style*, do not abbreviate months.

See also **months** and **days**.

**days** — Do not abbreviate days of the week unless in tabular format.

When writing a day and date, use a comma after the day and after the date.

Example:

**The reception will be held Tuesday, Oct. 18, at the Fine Arts Gallery.**

Do not set off days or dates with commas when they stand alone.

Example:

**The reception will be held Oct. 20 at the Fine Arts Gallery.**

For publication on a website, include the date, not just the day, so that the information remains timely and clear. For example, if you write John Smith died on Monday, that statement will be outdated and confusing within a week. Instead, write John Smith died on Monday, Jan. 26.

**dean** — Capitalize when used as a formal title before a name. Lowercase in other uses.

Example:

**During the ceremony, Dean Philippe Fauchet will present the award.**

**Philippe Fauchet, dean of the School of Engineering, will attend the conference.**

**The dean has published many books on the subject.**

Link to [Vanderbilt Administration Organizational Chart](#) for list of deans and university officers.

**decades** — Use figures to indicate decades of history. When abbreviating, precede with an apostrophe, not a single quotation mark. (The apostrophe resembles a 9; the single quote resembles a 6.) Form the plural by adding the letter *s*, no apostrophe.

Example:

Wrong: not 20's or 1960's

Right: '20s, '60s, 1960s

*Non-news Style:* Decades can be spelled out and lowercased (as long as the century is clear) or expressed in numerals.

**decision maker** (n.), **decision making** (n.), **decision-making** (adj.)

**degree designations (Vanderbilt alumni)** — In most circumstances, when referring to a Vanderbilt alumnus and denoting his or her Vanderbilt degree, list the earned degree abbreviation (no periods) after the name, followed immediately by an apostrophe (no space) and the last two digits of the degree year, all within commas.

**Example:**

Doug DeFonzo, BE'92, is a software developer with Microsoft Corp. in Waltham, Mass.

**degrees (academic)** — Lowercase degrees if spelled out: **bachelor of arts, master of science, doctorate, doctor of philosophy**. Do not follow the name of a degree with the word *degree*. Use an apostrophe in the short form: **bachelor's degree, master's**.

Wrong: He received a master of arts degree in anthropology.

Right: **He received a master of arts in anthropology.**

Right: **He received a master's degree in anthropology.**

Right: **Those receiving doctoral degrees should arrive by 9 a.m.**

Try to avoid the abbreviations B.A., B.S., M.S., etc., but if you do abbreviate degrees, then be sure to use periods after all the letters (with the exception of MBA, no periods). An exception to this recommendation is degree information that follows the name of a Vanderbilt alumnus within running text to designate that person's Vanderbilt degree and year. For this style, see **degree designations (Vanderbilt alumni)**.

An alternative to listing degree abbreviations is to use a phrase describing the degree, for example, “John Jones, who has a doctorate in psychology, ...”

Right: **Vanderbilt Owen Graduate School of Management maintained its position in this year’s rankings of accredited MBA programs.**

Do not precede a name with a courtesy title for an academic degree and follow it with the abbreviation for the degree in the same reference.

Wrong: Dr. Robert Smith, M.D., is chair of the department.

Right: **Dr. Robert Smith is chair of the department.**

Only people with an M.D. are referred to as Dr. and then only on first reference. People with Ph.D.’s are not referred to as Dr., nor is their name followed by their degree.

Plural: **M.A.’s, Ph.D.’s**

**departments, academic** — Capitalize only when using the **full, formal name** of a department. Lowercase other forms.

Example:

**the Department of History — the history department; the Department of Sociology — the sociology department; the Department of English — the English department; the French and English departments; the Departments of French and English.**

See also **division** and **program**.

**departments and offices, administrative** — Capitalize the full, formal name of the university’s administrative divisions, offices and departments.

Example:

**Division of Public Affairs; Office of Undergraduate Admissions**

A shortened version (i.e., dropping “Division of,” “Office of,” etc.) may be used on second reference and should be capitalized.

Example (for second reference):

**Public Affairs; Undergraduate Admissions**

Lowercase other forms.

Example:

**public affairs division; undergraduate admissions office**

**dimensions** — *News Style*: Use figures and spell out inches, feet, yards, etc.

Example, News Style:

**He is 5 feet 6 inches tall; the 5-foot-6-inch man; the 9-by-12 rug.**

*Non-news Style*: In dimensions, spell out whole numbers as well as designations of inches, feet, etc.

Example, Non-news Style:

**He is five feet six inches tall; the five-foot-six-inch man; the nine-by-twelve rug.**

**directions and regions** — In general, lowercase *north*, *south*, *southeast*, etc. when they indicate compass directions. Capitalize when they designate regions.

Example:

**When the coach’s latest recruit moved east from California to enroll at Vanderbilt, he made a promise to himself. He would become the best player in the Southeast.**

**disabled, disability** — Preferred terms, rather than *handicapped*. Use “people first language” that describes what a person has, not who the person is. For example, rather than writing “she is autistic,” instead write “she has autism.”

Avoid: *victim of, suffers with, afflicted by, wheelchair-bound, etc.*

Instead use:

**people with disabilities, people without disabilities, she has autism, he has a physical disability, person with a brain injury, people with mental illness, accessible seating, accessible parking, the disabled community.**

Use *separate* instead of *special* in such phrases as **separate bathroom, separate bus.**

**disc, disk** — Use the *disc* spelling for phonograph records and related terms (*disc jockey*), optical and laser-based devices (a *Blu-ray disc* or *compact disc*) and for *disc brake*. Use *disk* for computer-related references and medical references, such as a *slipped disk*.

**division** — Capitalize when using the **full, formal name** of a university division.

Example:

**The Division of Public Affairs serves as the university-wide hub for communications, marketing and public policy initiatives.**

Capitalize on second reference when the name is shortened (i.e., “Division of” is dropped).

Example (for second reference):

**Through its community outreach, Public Affairs strengthens important relationships.**

Lowercase when the official name is flopped.

Example:

**Every activity of the public affairs division supports the university’s mission.**

Do not capitalize when part of a person’s title unless the title precedes a name.

Example:

**First they contacted the vice chancellor for public affairs.**

**Vice Chancellor for Public Affairs Beth Fortune will chair the committee.**

**doctoral, doctorate** — To describe the doctor of philosophy degree, use *doctoral degree* or *doctorate*. Use the adjective *doctoral* for such uses as *doctoral program, doctoral candidates*. People with Ph.D.’s are not referred to as Dr., nor is their name followed by their degree.

Example:

**She will receive her second honorary doctorate during the ceremony.**

**The doctoral program is world renowned.**

**He received a doctoral degree in 1985.**

**dorm** — Use *residence hall* instead of *dorm* when referring to Vanderbilt living quarters.

**download** — One word.

**Dr.** — May be used as a title before the name of a medical doctor on first reference. Do not continue to use the title with subsequent references. Avoid using “Dr.” as a title before the name of an individual who holds a doctorate.

**Dyer Observatory** — See Vanderbilt Dyer Observatory.

## E-F

**each** — Takes singular verb.

Example:

**Each of the six residence halls houses upperclass students.**

**Each of the students is invited to the dinner.**

**Earth/earth** — Capitalize and do not precede with *the* if used as the proper name of the planet, especially in context with other planets.

Example:

**Martian meteorites may have carried microbial life from Mars to Earth.**

Lowercase in more general, nontechnical uses and in idioms.

Example:

**She is down to earth.**

**Paul Conkin’s book explores how Americans can craft policies that may preserve a healthy earth.**

**East Tennessee** — Capitalize this phrase describing the region of the state.

**e-book** — Lowercase unless starting a sentence.

**e-commerce** — Lowercase unless starting a sentence.

**either** — Takes singular verb.

Example:

**Either of the two rooms has sufficient lighting.**

**email** — (n. and v.) Lowercase, no hyphen.

**emeritus, emerita** — If after the name, set off by commas and lowercase. If before the name, set off by commas and uppercase. When used with *chancellor*, uppercase and do not use commas whether before or after the name.

Example:

**Michael L. Aurbach, professor of art, emeritus, said...; Professor of Art, Emeritus, Michael L. Aurbach said...; Joe B. Wyatt, Chancellor Emeritus, wrote...; Chancellor Emeritus Joe B. Wyatt wrote...**



**Engineering and Science Building** — Avoid using the acronym ESB.

See also **Innovation Pavilion** and **Wond'ry**.

**ensure, insure** — Use *ensure* in the more general sense to mean guarantee or make certain. Use *insure* only in the commercial sense, as in auto, life and health insurance.

Example:

**They want to ensure the accuracy of the report.**

**e-password**

**e-reader** — Lowercase unless starting a sentence.

**Facebook**

**faculty** — The word *faculty* is a collective noun, singular in form but identifying a group of individuals. Use with singular verb if emphasizing the faculty acting as a unit: *The Owen School faculty combines academic prestige with the real-world experience of top practitioners*. Use a plural verb if emphasizing faculty members individually: *Vanderbilt faculty have been quoted often in recent news reports regarding the issue*.

**faculty head of house, faculty heads of house** — Lowercase. Ok to use *head of house* or *faculty head* on second reference.

Example:

**Each of the ten faculty heads of house live year-round on The Ingram Commons in apartments located in each house.**

**She will become faculty head of West House in the fall.**

**She is the first physician to be a head of house on The Ingram Commons.**

**Faculty Senate, faculty senator** — Lowercase *senate* is acceptable on second reference.

Example:

**The Faculty Senate passed a resolution that will further faculty involvement in violence prevention efforts. The resolution calls for all faculty senators to participate in the VU PETSAs training module. A formal partnership between the senate and the Green Dot initiative also will be established.**

**fall break, fall semester** — Lowercase. Also lowercase when referring to a specific term, for example, fall 2015.

Example:

**The application deadline for fall 2016 is January 1.**

**He spent the fall semester studying in Germany.**

**The first lecture of the fall 2015 semester addressed sustainability.**

See also **seasons**.

**farther/further** — *Farther* refers to physical difference: **He walked farther into the woods.** *Further* refers to an extension of time or degree: **They decided to research the issue further before making a decision.**

**federal** — Lowercase unless part of a proper name.

Example:

**Federal Aviation Administration; federal taxes; federal loan program; federal government.**

**fellow** — Lowercase.

Example:

**She is a fellow of the American College of Physicians.**

**He is a Guggenheim fellow.**

**fellowship** — Capitalize if part of the proper name of the fellowship.

Example:

**She received a Guggenheim Fellowship last year.**

**The goal of the Michael B. Keegan Traveling Fellowship is to develop future leaders through world travel and experiential learning. Vanderbilt students interested in the Keegan fellowship must submit an application, a proposal for a plan of study/travel, a resume and letters of recommendation. A committee of former Keegan fellows, faculty and staff selects the winner.**

**fewer, less** — Use *fewer* to describe number of items, *less* to describe quantity.

Wrong: There were less student complaints this year. Of the 500 offers sent out, less than 200 were returned.

Right: **There were fewer student complaints this year. Of the 500 offers sent out, fewer than 200 were returned.**

Right: **She has fewer classes to take, but less time to take them.**

**first-year/freshman** (adj.) — *First-year* is often preferred. Note that *first-year* is hyphenated as an adjective.

Example:

**All first-year students are required to take certain placement tests.**

**All first-year residence halls have been designated as substance-free areas.**

**fiscal year** — The university's fiscal year runs July 1 through June 30, and carries the numerical designation of the latter year, e.g., July 1, 2015, through June 30, 2016, constitutes FY16. *FY* acceptable on second reference.

**foreign students** — Use *international students* instead.

**foreign words and phrases** — Unfamiliar foreign words and phrases are usually italicized. A word that is listed in a standard English dictionary (such as *Webster's Third New International*) is probably familiar enough to not require italics.

**Founder's Day** — March 17, the anniversary of the founding of Vanderbilt University in 1873.

### **Founder's Medal, Founders Walk**

**fractions** — Spell out amounts less than one, using hyphens: **two-thirds**, **four-fifths**, etc. Use figures for precise amounts more than one, converting to decimals whenever practical: **1.5 miles**, not 1 1/2 miles.

**Freedom Forum First Amendment Center at Vanderbilt University** — *First Amendment Center* okay on second reference and in headlines.

**freelance** (v. and adj.) **freelancer** (n.)

**freshman** — Use this singular form (not plural *freshmen*) as the adjective.

Example:

**the freshman representative, all the freshman residence halls.**

**full-time, full time** — Hyphenate as an adjective: **She is a full-time employee.** Otherwise, two words, no hyphen: **He works full time.**

### **fundraiser, fundraising**

Example:

**Nashville is a community with a strong tradition of charitable fundraising.**

**The telethon represents a yearlong fundraising effort.**

**For information about fundraising, please email the director.**

## **G-H**

**Garage** — Capitalize when part of the name of a Vanderbilt garage.

Example:

**Terrace Place Garage, South Garage, Central Garage.**

**gay** — Use to describe men and women attracted to the same sex, though *lesbian* is the more common term for women. Preferred over *homosexual* except in clinical contexts or references to sexual activity. Include sexual orientation only when it is pertinent to a story, and avoid references to “sexual preference” or to a gay or alternative “lifestyle.”

**GIF** — Abbreviation for *Graphics Interchange Format*. Use all uppercase unless used as a file name extension.

**Google, Googling, Googled**

**GPA** — No periods and all capitals. It is acceptable on first reference to either use *GPA* or to spell out *grade point average* (lowercase).

**grades** — Capitalize letters used for course grades (**A, B, C, D, F, I**) and grade names such as **Incomplete** and **Pass**. Do not put quotation marks around grades. Form the plural by adding apostrophe-s.

Example:

**He received three B's last semester.**

**groundbreaking** — No hyphen.

**handheld** (n.) **hand-held** (adj.)

**handicap parking** — Use **accessible parking** instead.

**handicapped** — See **disabled**.

**health care** — Two words in all uses.

Example:

**As a health care provider, she is interested in health care.**

**Heard Library, Heard Library system, Heard libraries** — Use for second reference to the Vanderbilt library system, which includes eight campus libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, and Vanderbilt Television News Archive. For first reference, use *Jean and Alexander Heard Library* or *Vanderbilt Libraries*.

See also **Central Library, Jean and Alexander Heard Library, and Vanderbilt Libraries**.

**height** — See **dimensions**.

**high-tech** — Not *hi-tech*.

**his/her** — Current practice requires that masculine pronouns not be used for generic references to non-gender-specific persons. Avoid the problem by pluralizing the reference or eliminating the pronoun whenever possible.

Example:

Instead of writing **A patient should fill his prescription immediately after his appointment**, instead write **Patients should fill their prescriptions immediately after appointments**.

In some cases, of course, the subject provides its own solution: **An ob/gyn patient should see her doctor regularly**.

**historic, historical** — A historic event is an important occurrence, one that stands out in history. Any occurrence in the past is a historical event.

**historical periods and events** — Capitalize the names of widely recognized epochs in anthropology, archaeology, geology and history: **the Bronze Age, the Dark Ages, the Middle Ages, the Pliocene Epoch**.

Capitalize also widely recognized popular names for periods and events: **the Atomic Age, the Great Depression, Prohibition**.

Lowercase *century*.

Capitalize only the proper nouns or proper adjectives in general descriptions of a period: **ancient Greece, classical Rome, the Victorian era, the fall of Rome, the fall of Saigon**.

**homecoming** — Not capitalized except when preceded by the name of the university (**Vanderbilt Homecoming**), used with the year as part of the name of a specific homecoming (**Homecoming 2017**), or used as part of the formal name of the event (**Reunion/Homecoming Weekend**). Lowercase other uses (**homecoming game, homecoming parade**).

See also **Reunion**.

**homepage** — One word.

**houses of The Ingram Commons** — Lowercase *house* unless used as part of the full, formal name, such as Hank Ingram House, Stambaugh House, etc.

**HTTP** — See **URL, URLs**.

## I-J

**ID** — Short for *identification*. Do not use periods (Wrong: I.D.)

**include** — *Include* refers to a partial listing. For example, do not say “participants included” and then list all the participants.

See also **colons** in the punctuation and formatting guide.

**initials** — *News Style*: No space between initials in personal names: **T.S. Eliot**. *Non-news Style*: Insert a space after the periods of initials in personal names: **T. S. Eliot**.

**Innovation Pavilion** — If its location is referenced, the Innovation Pavilion should be described as adjacent to the Engineering and Science Building.

See also **Engineering and Science Building** and **Wond'ry**.

**insure, ensure** — Use *insure* only in the commercial sense, as in auto, life and health insurance. Use *ensure* in the more general sense to mean guarantee or make certain.

Example:

**They want to ensure the accuracy of the report.**

**interface** — Avoid using *interface* as a verb.

Example:

Instead of **The students interface with their teachers**, try **An interface is created between students and teachers**. Or try using *interact* instead: **The students interact with their teachers**.

**international students** — Preferred phrase, instead of *foreign students*.

**internet** — Always lowercase.

**intranet** — Always lowercase.

**it's, its** — The contraction *it's* = it is: **It's good to see you**. In contractions, the apostrophe replaces letters that are left out in order to contract the word: *do not* contracts to *don't* with the apostrophe replacing the *o* of *not*. In *it's*, the apostrophe replaces the letter *i* from the word *is*.

The possessive of *it* is *its*: **Its length is manageable**. Remember that pronouns do not form the possessive with apostrophes: **his, hers, its, ours, yours**.

**Jean and Alexander Heard Library** — Use for first reference to the Vanderbilt library system. On second reference, use *Heard Library*, *Heard Library system*, or *Heard libraries*. *Vanderbilt Libraries* may also be used on first or second reference. The Heard Library consists of Biomedical Library, Central Library, Divinity Library, Law Library, Management Library, Music Library, Peabody Library, Science and Engineering Library, Special Collections and University Archives, and Vanderbilt Television News Archive.

See also **Central Library**, **Heard Library**, **Vanderbilt Libraries**.

**JPEG** — Abbreviation for *Joint Photographic Experts Group*. Use all uppercase unless used as a file name extension.

**junior, senior** — Abbreviate as Jr. and Sr. with no comma between the name and the Jr./Sr.

Example:

**Cal Turner Jr. founded the program in moral leadership.**

**He will deliver the keynote lecture for the Martin Luther King Jr. Commemorative Series.**

For alphabetical listings by last name, follow this format: **Doe, John, Jr.** Likewise, with the designation II: **Doe, John, II**.

## K-L

**Kennedy Center** — Okay on second reference to Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Research on Human Development. Can use *Kennedy Center* in first reference, if it's in the lead or headline. In that case, use full title on second reference.

**Law School** — See **Vanderbilt University Law School**.

**legislative titles** — *News Style*: On first reference, use Rep. and Sen. before the name. Spell out and lowercase *representative* and *senator* in other uses.

When including party and state affiliation, set off with commas (not parentheses) and use AP abbreviation for the state.

Example:

**Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn., will hold a roundtable discussion on health care.**

In a direct quotation, spell out and capitalize titles such as *senator*, *representative* and *governor* before a name.

Example, News Style:

**Republican Sen. Lamar Alexander attended the conference along with former Gov. Bredesen and former Gov. Don Sundquist. Former U.S. Sen. Bill Frist will lead a first-of-its-kind academic experience at Vanderbilt Owen Graduate School of Management.**

*Non-news Style*: Do not abbreviate.

Example, Non-news Style:

**Lamar Alexander, Republican senator from Tennessee; Senator Lamar Alexander; the senator; Bill Haslam, governor of the state of Tennessee; Tennessee governor Bill Haslam; Governor Bill Haslam; Barack Obama, president of the United States; President Obama; the president.**

**lesbian** — See **gay**.

**LGBT** — Acceptable on first reference for *lesbian*, *gay*, *bisexual* and *transgender*, but should be spelled out in the body of the story.

**LGBTQI Life** — Use *LGBTQI Life* or *Office of LGBTQI Life* in headline or lead. Also okay for second reference to Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Life.

**library** — Acceptable second reference to any Vanderbilt library.

See also **Central Library**, **Heard Library**, **Jean and Alexander Heard Library**, and **Vanderbilt Libraries**.

**log in** (v.), **login** (n.)

Example: Use your VUNetID to log in. If your login is unsuccessful, contact VUIT.

**log on** (v.), **logon** (n. and adj.) — Use *log on to*, not *log onto*.

Example:

**log on to our site, to execute a logon, the logon command**

**listserv** — Lowercase. Note that there is no “e” at the end.

**-long** — *Daylong, monthlong, yearlong* and *lifelong* are all one word, no hyphen. Hyphenate *semester-long* (adj.).

## M-N

**majors, minors** — In general, do not capitalize academic majors or minors unless they include a proper noun.

Example:

**She earned her bachelor’s degree in anthropology.**

**He majored in English literature.**

**She has a minor in chemistry.**

**maker movement**

**Margaret Cuningim Women’s Center** — Watch the spelling; can be called *the Women’s Center* (uppercase) on second reference.

See also **center**.

**The Martha Rivers Ingram Commons at Vanderbilt** — Use for first reference. For second reference, use *The Ingram Commons*. The location of The Ingram Commons should be referred to as the southeastern part (or portion, section, etc.) of the Vanderbilt University campus. Note the capitalization of “The” in “The Martha Rivers Ingram Commons at Vanderbilt” and “The Ingram Commons” as well as in “The Commons Center.” Use *on* (not *in* or *at*) in such sentences as, “students live on The Ingram Commons.”

Example:

**In fall 2008, The Martha Rivers Ingram Commons at Vanderbilt welcomed its first class.**

**The foundation of the College Halls system is The Martha Rivers Ingram Commons at Vanderbilt.**

**The Ingram Commons brings together all first-year students in a community of 10 residence halls known as “houses,” each guided by a faculty head of house.**

**First-year students live on The Martha Rivers Ingram Commons at Vanderbilt, eat at The Commons Center and occasionally share a meal at the residence of the dean of The Ingram Commons.**

**The Ingram Commons dining hall is open to students all night, every night, as a group collaboration and study space.**

**Maymester** — *Maymester* is the preferred term to describe the courses offered in the interim between spring semester final exams and the beginning of summer session courses.

**MBA** — No periods. Note that the correct article to use before MBA is *an*.



Example:

**She received an MBA from Vanderbilt Owen Graduate School of Management.**

**M.D.** — See **degrees (academic)**.

**Medical Center** — Capitalize as a second reference to Vanderbilt University Medical Center. When referring to other medical centers or medical centers in general, lowercase.

Example:

**Vanderbilt University Medical Center's campus at One Hundred Oaks makes high quality health care more accessible. The Medical Center provides many services at this convenient location.**

**Duke has also banned smoking from its medical center.**

**There has been a decrease in sponsored research at other medical centers.**

See also **Vanderbilt University Medical Center**.

**medical school** — Lowercase in general uses or on second reference to the Vanderbilt School of Medicine.

**Middle Tennessee** — Capitalize this phrase describing the region of the state.

**midnight** — Do not put a 12 in front of it. See also **a.m.**, **p.m.** and **noon**.

Example:

**The celebration will begin at midnight.**

**minuscule** — So spelled, not *miniscule*. Means "very small."

**Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt** — Use for first reference and on maps. For second reference, use *Children's Hospital*. Do not use *Vanderbilt Children's Hospital*.

**months** — *News Style*: Some months are abbreviated when used in an exact date: **Nov. 11, 1918**. Months with fewer than six letters in their names are not abbreviated.

The following are abbreviated: **Jan. Feb. Aug. Sept. Oct. Nov. Dec.**

The following are not abbreviated: **March April May June July**

Months are spelled out when used alone or with the year only: **January 1993**; notice that there is no comma between the month and the year.

*Non-news Style*: Months are not abbreviated in running text.

**Moore College** — Can use *Moore* or *the college* on second reference.

See also **College Halls at Vanderbilt** and **Warren and Moore colleges**.

**more than/over** — In general, use *over* to describe spatial relationships; use *more than* with figures.

Example:

**The airplane flew over the mountains. The cost was more than \$300. More than 400 Vanderbilt students participated in Alternative Spring Break.**

**Move-In Day, Move-In Weekend** — Uppercase for the event name (note the capital “I”).

However, lowercase when used generically, such as, *the move-in process, the move-in experience.*

Example:

**Contact the Office of Housing and Residential Education for more information about move-in and Vanderbilt residence halls.**

**The Move Crew is a group of student volunteers who assist new students during Move-In Day.**

**multi** — In general, do not hyphenate words beginning with this prefix.

Example:

**multifaceted, multipurpose, multicultural.**

**multitasking** — One word. The running of two or more programs on one computer at the same time.

Also now used to refer to human beings who are working at two or more tasks simultaneously.

**myself, me** — Avoid the fairly common mistake of using *myself* when *me* is the correct word.

Wrong: The report will be delivered to the chancellor and myself.

Right: **The report will be delivered to the chancellor and me.**

The word *myself* is a reflexive/intensive pronoun that is correctly used in a construction such as **She wrote the report herself, I will exclude myself from the voting, They did it for themselves**, where the pronoun refers to the same person as the person who is subject of the sentence.

**named chairs** — Named chairs and professorships are always capitalized in faculty titles, whether preceding or following the name of the faculty member. The named chair is a position that the faculty member holds, whereas the named professorship is the title of the chair holder. Thus, the correct language indicates that one *holds* a chair *in*, and *is* a professor *of*.

Example:

**Stephen Fesik holds the Orrin H. Ingram II Chair in Cancer Research.**

**Stephen Fesik is the Orrin H. Ingram II Professor of Cancer Research.**

**Orrin H. Ingram II Professor of Cancer Research Stephen Fesik has been awarded a National Institutes of Health Director’s Pioneer Award for his proposal to push the boundaries of drug discovery.**

**Stephen Fesik, the Orrin H. Ingram II Chair in Cancer Research, is the first investigator from Vanderbilt to receive the coveted National Institutes of Health Director’s Pioneer Award.**

**names** — *News Style*: On first reference, use the person’s full first name and last name and title. Do not use a courtesy title (such as Mr. or Ms.), except for medical doctors and then use Dr. only on first reference. On second reference, use only the last name, without title and without courtesy title.

Example:

**With the recently announced NSF funding, Professor Xenofon Koutsoukos will continue his research on next-generation design. Koutsoukos is taking a new approach.**

**nationwide** — No hyphen.

**Native American** — One of the descendants of the indigenous peoples of North America. Avoid the potentially derogatory term Indian. Do not hyphenate as noun or adjective.

Example:

**Native American students voiced their approval.**

**neither** — Takes a singular verb.

Example:

**Neither of the students is available.**

**newspaper and periodical names** — Names of newspapers and periodicals are italicized.

*News Style:* Capitalize *the* in a newspaper's name if that is the way the publication prefers to be known. In cases where the paper's location is needed for clarity but is not part of the official name, use parentheses to indicate location.

Example, News Style:

**The editor of *The Tennessean* will participate in the panel discussion. The article about Coach Mason in *The Huntsville (Ala.) Times* caught the student's attention.**

*Non-news Style:* When a newspaper or magazine is mentioned in running text, an initial *the* in the publication name is lowercase (unless it begins a sentence) and is not italic.

Example, Non-news Style:

**The article appeared in the *Tennessean*.**

**non-** — In general, do not use a hyphen when forming a compound: **nonprofit, nonexistent**. Use a hyphen, however, before proper nouns or in awkward combinations: **non-nuclear, non-English-speaking**.

**noon** — Do not put a 12 in front of it. See also **a.m., p.m.** and **midnight**.

Example:

**The meeting begins at noon.**

**numbers** — *News Style:* Spell out whole numbers below 10 or at the beginning of a sentence; use figures for 10 and above. For ordinals, spell out first through ninth; starting with 10th, use figures. Exception: for percentages, dimensions and ages, use figures, even for 1-9.

*Non-news Style:* In ordinary text, spell out whole numbers from one through ninety-nine and any of these followed by *hundred, thousand, million, etc.* (*one hundred* would thus be spelled out). For all other numbers, use figures. For percentages, use figures: **There was a 9 percent increase**. Use an en-dash to indicate a range: **10 a.m.–5 p.m., April 5–11**.

In both news style and non-news style, if you must start a sentence with a number, spell the number out. When writing a span of numbers, do not combine a preposition with a hyphen or en-dash.

Right: **The classroom could accommodate 15-25 people.** Or: **The classroom could hold from 15 to 25 people. He published his articles between May 5, 1967, and April 11, 1971.**

Wrong: The classroom could hold from 15-25 people.

The choice of how to handle numbers may be determined by the nature of the publication in question, its audience, formality, longevity, etc. Spelling out numbers is the more formal choice.

See also **credit hours**.

## O-P

**office** — The names of university offices are uppercase when the full, formal name is used. A shortened form (i.e., “Office of” is dropped) used on second reference is also uppercase.

Example:

**Staff from the Office of Undergraduate Admissions have begun the process of reviewing applications. Once Undergraduate Admissions completes the review, then letters are mailed out to applicants.**

A “reversed” version of the full, formal name is lowercase.

Example:

**The undergraduate admissions office has received a record number of applications.**

**online** — One word.

**Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Life** — For second reference and in a headline or lead, use *Office of LGBTQI Life* or *LGBTQI Life*.

**offline** — One word.

**One Hundred Oaks** — See **Vanderbilt Health One Hundred Oaks**.

**orthopaedics** — The Vanderbilt University Medical Center prefers this spelling over *orthopedics*, so use *orthopaedics* when referring to VUMC departments, personnel, etc. When using in a general sense, use *orthopedics*.

Example:

**The Department of Orthopaedics will sponsor a lecture Nov. 10.**

**over/more than** — Use *over* to describe spatial relationships: **The airplane flew over the mountains.** Use *more than* with figures: **The cost was more than \$300.**

**Owen Graduate School of Management** — Properly referred to as Vanderbilt Owen Graduate School of Management (not *Vanderbilt’s*). Can use *Owen* or *the Owen School* on second reference. Avoid *OGSM*.

**part-time, part time** — Hyphenate as an adjective: **She is a part-time employee.** Otherwise, two words, no hyphen: **He works part time.**

**PDF** — Abbreviation for *portable document format*. Use all uppercase unless used as a file name extension.

Example:

**His assistant emailed a PDF of the schedule. The file name is schedule.pdf.**

**Peabody College** — Can use *Peabody* on second reference. In news releases, on first reference use *Peabody College of education and human development*. If first reference is in headline or lead, can use *Peabody College* on first reference and refer to with full name on second. Do not use *George Peabody College for Teachers* unless referring to the college before 1979.

**percent** — Spell out the word *percent*; do not use the symbol (%). Use figures with percentages: **9 percent, 0.6 percent**. Note that in some cases, such as in tables or scientific and statistical copy, the % symbol may be appropriate.

**Ph.D.** — See **degrees (academic)**.

**Ph.D. student and Ph.D. candidate** — Do not use these terms interchangeably. A Ph.D. student is a student enrolled in a Ph.D. program. Ph.D. candidates are Ph.D. students who have completed the steps required by their programs and the Graduate School to be admitted to candidacy.

**pickup (n. and adj.), pick up (v.)**

**p.m., a.m.** — Lowercase, with periods. Use figures to designate time using a.m. and p.m. For noon and midnight, use the words *noon* and *midnight* without the figure 12. Avoid redundancy: not **10 a.m. this morning**.

Example:

**The lecture begins at 11 a.m., followed by a reception at 1 p.m. The committee meets at noon.**

See also **time**.

**Police Department** — Okay on second reference to Vanderbilt University Police Department. *VUPD* may also be used on second reference.

**post-** — Words beginning with the prefix *post-* are usually closed, no hyphen, unless the root word is a proper noun.

Example:

**postdoctoral, postgraduate, post-Reagan.**

**pre-** — Words beginning with the prefix *pre-* are usually closed, no hyphen, unless the root word is a proper noun.

Example:

**preadmission, premed, prelaw, pre-Columbian.**

**prefixes** — Generally, do not use a hyphen when using a prefix with a word starting with a consonant. Except for *cooperate* and *coordinate*, use a hyphen if the prefix ends in a vowel and the word that follows begins with the same vowel. Do use a hyphen before capitalized words or numerals or in awkward constructions that might be misleading or difficult to read such as *non-nuclear*.

Example:

**multistory building, nonprofit organization, non-nuclear plant, postdoctoral research, antiwar movement, antebellum, re-establish, pretrial hearing, pre-election debate, pre-Columbian, pre-1914.**

See also **co-** and **non-** entries.

**president** — Capitalize only as a formal title before one or more names: President Obama, Presidents Ford and Carter. Lowercase in all other uses: the president; George Washington, first president of the United States.

### **Presidents Day**

**preventive** — Avoid using *preventative*.

**product/company names** — The use of product names or companies may be construed as a tacit endorsement by the university, thus raising conflict-of-interest questions and other problems. Use generic titles or descriptions whenever possible.

Example:

Use **copy**, not **xerox**.

**professor** — Capitalize before a name; lowercase elsewhere. However, a named professorship is always capitalized. Always identify faculty by their academic rank and department in published materials. The form is *professor*, *associate professor* or *assistant professor of* followed by the applicable field.

Example:

Professor of Sociology Holly McCammon; Professor Holly McCammon; Holly McCammon, professor of sociology; she is a professor of sociology; she is a professor in the Department of Sociology.

Cecelia Tichi, Gertrude Conaway Vanderbilt Professor of English

See also **titles (academic and administrative)** and **named chairs**.

**program** — In general, uppercase formal names of academic programs. The word *program* is capitalized in a formal name such as “the Program in Women’s and Gender Studies,” but is lowercase when used at the end of the reference, such as “the Women’s and Gender Studies program.” Programs have directors, not chairs. When referring to the program as a major or minor, do not capitalize (except for proper nouns).

Example:

**The Women’s and Gender Studies program offers an interdisciplinary graduate certificate in gender studies.**

**She majored in women’s and gender studies.**

**The Program in Women’s and Gender Studies examines gender and sexuality as social constructs.**

**Both the major and minor in communication of science and technology are interdisciplinary.**

The joint master's degree combines the Owen Graduate School of Management's MBA with a master's degree in Latin American studies.

David J. Wasserstein came to Vanderbilt in 2004 as a professor of Jewish studies and history.

## Q-R

**real time** — Does not have a hyphen unless used as an adjective.

Example:

The webcast will take place in real time; the real-time webcast.

**regions** — In general, capitalize *North, South, East, West, Northeast*, etc., when they designate regions; lowercase when they indicate compass direction. Capitalize *Middle Tennessee, East Tennessee, West Tennessee*.

Example:

He drove west.

The cold front is moving in from the east.

The North was victorious.

She has a Southern accent.

A storm system that developed in the Midwest is spreading eastward.

**Reunion, Reunion Weekend, Reunion and Homecoming Weekend, Reunion/Homecoming, Reunion/Homecoming Weekend** — Capitalize when referring specifically to Vanderbilt's annual event.

**R.N.** — If used, follows name and is set off by commas.

Example:

Jane Smith, R.N., coordinates the program.

See also **degrees (academic)**.

**Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities** — Can use *the humanities center* (lowercase) or *the Warren Center* on second reference.

**room** — Capitalize before a room number, but do not capitalize specific room names such as *atrium, refectory, rotunda*.

Example:

The class is in Room 242.

The meeting is in the atrium of the Wyatt Center.

The breakfast will be in the Divinity School refectory.

The meeting was held July 12 in the Wyatt Center rotunda.

**R.S.V.P.** — Use uppercase letters with periods for this abbreviation of the French phrase *repondez s'il vous plait* (= respond if you please, please reply).

## S-T

**Sarratt Student Center** — Can use *Sarratt* on second reference or *the student center* (lowercase).

**Sarratt Cinema, Sarratt Promenade** — Can use *the cinema* and *the promenade* on second reference.

Example:

**Sarratt Promenade is a student gathering place on the second floor of Sarratt Student Center. Student groups and university organizations sometimes use the promenade for special events.**

**schools** — Capitalize the full names of Vanderbilt’s 10 schools and colleges: **Blair School of Music, College of Arts and Science, Divinity School, Graduate School, Vanderbilt University Law School, Vanderbilt Owen Graduate School of Management, Peabody College, School of Engineering, School of Medicine, School of Nursing.**

Recommended second references are: Blair or the Blair School, Arts and Science, the law school, Owen or the Owen School, Peabody, the engineering school, the medical school, the nursing school.

References to “the school” or “the college” are lowercase. In general, avoid acronyms such as CAS, OGSM, VUSE, VUSN, etc.

See also the chart below and entries under some individual school names.

### Vanderbilt Colleges and Schools

First Reference	Second Reference	Notes
College of Arts and Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arts and Science</li> <li>• the college (if no other college is referenced)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not use &amp;</li> </ul>
Blair School of Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blair</li> <li>• the Blair School</li> </ul>	
Vanderbilt Divinity School	Divinity School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid using VDS</li> </ul>
School of Engineering		
Graduate School		
Vanderbilt Law School Vanderbilt University Law School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the law school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not use School of Law</li> </ul>
School of Medicine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the medical school</li> </ul>	
School of Nursing		
Owen Graduate School of Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Owen</li> <li>• the Owen School</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not use OGSM</li> </ul>
Peabody College of education and human development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peabody</li> <li>• Peabody College</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If first reference is in headline or lead, can use Peabody College on first reference and then full name on second reference.</li> </ul>



**Schulman Center for Jewish Life** — Can use *Schulman Center* on second reference.

**seasons** — Do not capitalize *winter, spring, summer* or *fall*, unless part of a formal name: **Winter Olympics**. Do not capitalize seasons as part of an academic period: **spring semester, spring break, spring 2016**.

**semester** — Lowercase: **spring semester, fall semester, fall 2016, spring 2016**.

**sign-up** (n. and adj.) **sign up** (v.)

**smartphone, cellphone** — One word, lowercase.

**spring break, spring semester** — Lowercase. Also lowercase when referring to a specific term: **spring 2016**.

**state names** — Spell out the names of U.S. states whether standing alone or used in conjunction with a city, town, village or military base.

When using a city name in conjunction with state name in a sentence, set off the state with commas.

Example:

**Jane Smith plans to return to Cleveland, Ohio, to launch the new program this fall.**

Do not use postal abbreviations unless giving a mailing address.

The following abbreviations may be used when abbreviations are necessary, such as for lists and tables:

**Ala. Ariz. Ark. Calif. Colo. Conn. Del. Fla. Ga. Ill. Ind. Kan. Ky. La. Md. Mass. Mich. Minn. Miss. Mo. Mont. Neb. Nev. N.H. N.J. N.M. N.Y. N.C. N.D. Okla. Ore. Pa. R.I. S.C. S.D. Tenn. Vt. Va. Wash. W. Va. Wis. Wyo.** However, the names of the following eight states should not be abbreviated (except for postal abbreviations in mailing addresses): **Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah.**

**statewide** — One word, no hyphen.

**street** — *News Style*: Use abbreviation only with numbered address: **110 Webster St.**

*Non-news Style*: Spell out.

See also **addresses**.

**superscripts** — Do not use with ordinals.

Wrong: not 12<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>

Right: **12th, 22nd**

**teaching assistant, teaching fellow** — Lowercase; generally preferred rather than *TA* or *TF*, even on second reference.

Example:

Next year, she will serve as a teaching assistant at the Blair School while preparing to audition for graduate school in piano performance.

Metro teachers will use the fellows, who are knowledgeable about the content and applications of science, engineering and technology, as classroom resources.

**team** — Do not capitalize *football team*, *basketball team*, etc.

**telephone numbers** — Complete telephone numbers should be provided in any written copy with the area code in parentheses and seven-digit number separated by hyphens: (615) 322-2706.

Example:

Call (615) 322-2706 for more information.

**The Vanderbilt Clinic** — TVC acceptable on second reference. Note that *The* is uppercase in the clinic name.

Example:

A variety of ambulatory specialty practices of Vanderbilt Medical Group are located at The Vanderbilt Clinic. TVC offers outpatient diagnostic and treatment services.

**theater, theatre** — Use *theatre* in reference to Vanderbilt's Department of Theatre, as this is their preferred spelling. For general purposes, use *theater*. In proper names of programs and buildings, maintain the spelling used by that entity.

Example:

Tennessee Repertory Theatre sometimes performs in TPAC's Polk Theater.

**time** — Use figures: 11 a.m.; 3:30 p.m., except for noon and midnight. For noon and midnight, use the words *noon* and *midnight* without the figure 12. *News Style* requires omitting :00 following the hour (not 11:00 a.m.). **Do not use o'clock.**

When indicating a span of time, use a hyphen (or en-dash in non-news-style) if not using prepositions. If using "from" use "to" instead of a hyphen (or en-dash):

Wrong: The open house is from 5-7 p.m.

Right: The open house is from 5 to 7 p.m. A reception honoring the artist will be held from 3 to 4:30 p.m. The meeting will be Thursday, April 13, 3-4 p.m.

See also a.m., p.m.

**titles** — See **titles of works** in the *Punctuation and grammar guide* section.

**titles (academic and administrative)** — Capitalize and spell out formal titles such as professor or dean when they precede a name. Lowercase elsewhere.

Example:

**Professor of History William Caferro; William Caferro, professor of history; history professor William Caferro; Associate Professor of Physics Kelly Holley-Bockelmann; Kelly Holley-Bockelmann, associate professor of physics; Associate Dean Roger Moore; Roger Moore, associate dean of the College of Arts and Science; Douglas McMahon, professor and chair of biological sciences; Vice Chancellor for Public Affairs Beth Fortune; Beth Fortune, vice chancellor for public affairs.**

Exception: Named and endowed chairs and professorships are always capitalized.

Example:

**Emmanuele DiBenedetto, Centennial Professor of Mathematics and professor of molecular physiology and biophysics**

**Peter Cummings, John R. Hall Professor of Chemical Engineering**

Always identify faculty members by their academic rank and department in published materials. If a faculty member holds several academic titles, use the one that has a direct bearing on the story.

The forms for Vanderbilt titles are associate provost “for”; vice chancellor, associate vice chancellor, assistant vice chancellor “for”; dean “of” (there are some exceptions where “dean for” is used; consult the *Registry* for correct title); chair or chairperson “of”; director “of” (there are some exceptions where “director for” is used; consult the *Registry* for correct title); professor, associate professor, and assistant professor “of”; instructor “in”; and lecturer “in”—followed by the applicable field or unit.

See also **emeritus** and **named chairs**.

**transgender** — Use the pronoun preferred by the individuals who have acquired the physical characteristics of the opposite sex or present themselves in a way that does not correspond with their sex at birth. If that preference is not expressed, use the pronoun consistent with the way the individuals live publicly.

**T-shirt** — Hyphenate and use capital *T*.

**tweet** (n. and v.), **retweet** (n. and v.) — Lowercase.

Example:

**A tweet consists of 140 characters.**

**The witness was tweeting almost nonstop during the attack.**

**A few of his tweets were retweeted, and he also gained a few new Twitter followers as a result of the conference.**

**Twitter** (n. and adj.) — Uppercase.

Example:

**Graduating students can follow Commencement activities on Twitter.**

**The official Twitter feed of Vanderbilt University, @VanderbiltU, keeps followers up-to-date on everything from midterms to the latest discoveries happening at the university.**

## U-Z

**United States** — Although the abbreviation U.S. is acceptable as both noun and adjective, it is often preferable to spell out the name of the country as a noun.

Example:

**The United States continues to experience economic growth.**

**university** — Lowercase when standing alone, including references to Vanderbilt.

Do not capitalize the generic term *university* when plural and preceded by two or more proper nouns: **Vanderbilt and Indiana universities**. However, when the generic term *university* is plural and followed by more than one name, it is generally capitalized: **Universities of California and Colorado**.

Example:

**The university comprises 10 schools.**

**university-wide** — Hyphenate as an adjective before a noun. If used after the noun, then two words, no hyphen.

Example:

**The university-wide survey sought opinions from all Vanderbilt staff. The survey was university wide.**

See also **campuswide**.

**upload** — One word.

**upperclass student** — Use instead of *upperclassman*.

**URL, URLs** — Web addresses should not include special spacing or font treatment and should not be introduced by a colon. A URL can be broken at the end of a line if necessary, but do not add a hyphen. If a URL is at the end of a sentence, include normal ending punctuation, e.g., a period. Generally, URLs do not need the `http://` or the `www` in front of them. But always check that all URLs work exactly as printed.

*Exception: Vanderbilt magazine italicizes web addresses in its print edition, and Creative Services usually italicizes web addresses in running text.*

Example:

**For more information on the Vanderbilt ID card, visit [vanderbilt.edu/cardservices](http://vanderbilt.edu/cardservices).**

**Explore scientific research at Vanderbilt at [news.vanderbilt.edu/research](http://news.vanderbilt.edu/research).**

**U.S.** — The abbreviation is acceptable as a noun or adjective for *United States*.

Example:

**Collaborations between the Vanderbilt School of Engineering and the U.S. Air Force have led to exciting new discoveries.**

**utilize** — Generally better to use *use*.

**Vanderbilt Alumni Association** — Use for first reference. For subsequent references, the *Alumni Association* (retaining capitalization) is acceptable.

**Vanderbilt Bill Wilkerson Center for Otolaryngology and Communication Sciences** — For second reference, use *Wilkerson Center*.

**Vanderbilt bookstore** — Acceptable on second reference for *Barnes & Noble at Vanderbilt*. Can also use *the bookstore, the campus bookstore* (lowercase).

**Vanderbilt Clinic** — See **The Vanderbilt Clinic**.

**Vanderbilt Dyer Observatory** — Use for first reference. For second reference, use either *Dyer* or *Dyer Observatory*.

**Vanderbilt Health One Hundred Oaks** — Use for first or second reference to Vanderbilt University Medical Center's campus at 100 Oaks Mall. Depending on the context, *One Hundred Oaks* may be used for second reference. Note that when describing the Vanderbilt facility, *One Hundred Oaks* is spelled out, although the name of the mall itself uses numerals, *100 Oaks Mall*.

**Vanderbilt in France, Vanderbilt in Germany** — No hyphen in the names of these and similar Vanderbilt study abroad programs.

**Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Research on Human Development** — Can use *Kennedy Center* on second reference. Can use *Kennedy Center* in first reference, if it's in the lead or headline. In that case, use full title on second reference.

**Vanderbilt Libraries** — Acceptable for first or second reference to the Vanderbilt library system. See also **Central Library, Heard Library, and Jean and Alexander Heard Library**.

**Vanderbilt Medical Center** — Use *Vanderbilt University Medical Center* instead. *VUMC* is acceptable on second reference or in headlines.

**Vanderbilt Police Department** — Use *Vanderbilt University Police Department* instead. *VUPD* is acceptable on second reference or in headlines.

**Vanderbilt Psychiatric Hospital**

**Vanderbilt Recreation and Wellness Center** — Can use *Recreation and Wellness Center* or *the center* on second reference. In most instances, avoid using the acronym *VRWC*.

**Vanderbilt University** — Appropriate first reference is *Vanderbilt University*. Appropriate second reference is *Vanderbilt* for the university and *Commodores* for athletic references.

**Vanderbilt University Hospital** — Can use *Vanderbilt Hospital* or *VUH* on second reference or in headlines.

**Vanderbilt University Law School/Vanderbilt Law School** — Preferred references. Do not use *School of Law*. Lowercase *law school* when the phrase stands alone.

Example:

The program is sponsored by the Vanderbilt Law School. The law school brings speakers to campus each semester.

**Vanderbilt University Medical Center** — *VUMC* or *the Medical Center* are acceptable on second reference or in headlines. Do not refer to as the *Med Center*. The Medical Center comprises Vanderbilt Hospital, Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt, Vanderbilt Psychiatric Hospital, Stallworth Rehabilitation Hospital, The Vanderbilt Clinic, Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center, and Vanderbilt Heart, and is affiliated with Vanderbilt University School of Medicine and School of Nursing.

See also **Medical Center**.

**Vanderbilt University Police Department** — *VUPD* acceptable on second reference or in headlines.

**Vanderbilt University Residence** — Preferred reference for the residence located at 211 Deer Park Drive in Belle Meade. Formerly a residence for the chancellor, the Vanderbilt University Residence is now a site for special university events.

**Vandy** — Although Athletics, Development and Alumni Relations, and other campus offices do use *Vandy* for promotional purposes and social media, it is generally advisable to avoid this shortened form of the university name.

**versus** — In ordinary writing, spell out *versus*. In court cases, use *v*.

Example:

Hespos and Spelke tested whether five-month-old infants from native English-speaking homes detected the tight versus loose fit concept.

The article by Herman O. Loewenstein Professor of Law Suzanna Sherry analyzes the intellectual background of *Marbury v. Madison*.

**vice chair** — Use two words, no hyphen.

**vice chancellor** — Do not hyphenate. All Vanderbilt vice chancellors are vice chancellors *for* their divisions, not *of*: **vice chancellor for administration**; **vice chancellor for public affairs**. Do not capitalize the division name when it is in the vice chancellor’s title, unless the title precedes the name.

Example:

**Vice Chancellor for Investments and Chief Investment Officer Anders Hall manages the university's endowment.**

**Eleven faculty members from across campus were invited to serve on the Vice Chancellor's Advisory Council to provide input to George Hill, vice chancellor for equity, diversity and inclusion and chief diversity officer.**

Vanderbilt's vice chancellors are as follows:

Audrey J. Anderson, vice chancellor, general counsel and secretary of the university

Beth A. Fortune, vice chancellor for public affairs

Anders W. Hall, vice chancellor for investments and chief investment officer

George C. Hill, Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer

Eric C. Kopstain, vice chancellor for administration

John M. Lutz, vice chancellor for information technology

Susie S. Stalcup, vice chancellor for development and alumni relations

Brett Sweet, vice chancellor for finance and chief financial officer

Susan R. Wentz, provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs [On first reference, always include middle initial for Susan R. Wentz.]

David Williams II, vice chancellor for athletics and university affairs and athletics director

**videoconferencing** — One word.

**voice mail** — Two words.

**VUceptor**

**VUconnect** — Note the capitalization in the name of Vanderbilt's online alumni community.

**VUnetID**

**wait list** (n.) **wait-list** (v.)

**Warren College and Moore College, Warren and Moore colleges** — On second reference, can use *Warren and Moore, the colleges, Warren, Moore, the college*. Note that "faculty director" and "graduate fellow" should be lowercase when referring to these leaders within the colleges.

Example:

**Warren and Moore are the two newest residential colleges that are part of the College Halls at Vanderbilt system.**

**Each college is divided into two halls, with each hall led by a graduate fellow. Faculty directors live in the colleges and serve as mentors.**

**Once students enter Warren or Moore in their sophomore year, they can remain in the same college as juniors and seniors.**

Moore College includes Rice Hall and Smith Hall. Warren College includes Elliston Hall and Delbruck Hall. Each hall is led by resident graduate fellows who work with the faculty director of the college to facilitate leadership development and programming goals.

**Warren Center** — Acceptable second reference to Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities.

**Washington, D.C.** — Use periods with D.C. and set it off with commas.

Example:

**Vanderbilt's Washington, D.C., office is located a short walk from the Capitol.**

**web** — Lowercase. The following web-related compounds are treated as one word, lowercase: **webcam, webcast, webmaster, webpage, website**. Names of most websites are capitalized without quotation marks or italics.

Example:

**Commodore fans can find schedules for all Vanderbilt sports on the web.**

**She serves as assistant director of web-based learning.**

**The department always includes their web address on their publications.**

**The best place to learn about web design is the web itself.**

**Go to the Sarratt Art Studios website to register for classes.**

**webcam, webcast, webmaster, webpage, website**

**West Tennessee** — Capitalize this region of the state.

**Western** — Generally capitalize when referring to a part of the world.

Example:

**International scholars will discuss the historic role of nationalism in the Western hemisphere during a conference at Vanderbilt.**

**The course will cover the style periods of classical Western music.**

See also **regions**.

**WiFi**

**Wilkerson Center** — Use for second reference to Vanderbilt Bill Wilkerson Center for Otolaryngology and Communication Sciences.

**Women's Center** — Acceptable second reference for Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center.

**Wond'ry** — First reference should be *the Wond'ry at the Innovation Pavilion*. For subsequent references, use *the Wond'ry*. If its location is referenced, the Wond'ry should be described as adjacent to the Engineering and Science Building.



Example:

**Vanderbilt University’s Wond’ry at the Innovation Pavilion is the campus epicenter for creativity, collaboration and entrepreneurship for students and faculty across all academic disciplines. The center hosts an abundance of programs designed to foster an interdisciplinary spirit of creation, innovation and experiential learning. The Wond’ry is adjacent to the Engineering and Science Building, an interdisciplinary research and teaching building.**

See also **Engineering and Science Building** and **Innovation Pavilion**.

**World Wide Web** — Usually called *the web*.

See also **web**.

### **writer-in-residence**

**Wyatt Center** — Preferred for most uses instead of the full name of the building, Faye and Joe B. Wyatt Center for Education.

Example:

**Following a luncheon held in the rotunda of the Wyatt Center, Shalala met with a group of faculty members to discuss collegiate athletics.**

**X-ray** — Hyphenate and use capital X.

**Zeppos, Nicholas S.** — Vanderbilt University’s eighth chancellor. Do not use the shortened “Nick Zeppos” for official references. He is married to Lydia Howarth. Zeppos joined the Vanderbilt faculty in 1987 as an assistant professor in the law school. He subsequently served as an associate dean and then as associate provost before being named provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs in 2002. On August 1, 2007, Zeppos was named interim chancellor. He was named chancellor on March 1, 2008.

See also **chancellor**.

**ZIP code** — Use all caps for *ZIP*, because it is an acronym for Zoning Improvement Plan; *code* should be lowercase.

## Punctuation and grammar guide

**abbreviations and acronyms** — For most, first reference should be written out; then use abbreviation/ acronym on second reference.

Example:

**The Vanderbilt Institute for Global Health held a global health forum at the Vanderbilt Student Life Center in February. VIGH works to establish sustainable, scalable health and development programs in resource-limited settings.**

Do not follow an organization's full name with its abbreviation or acronym in parentheses or set off by dashes. If an abbreviation/ acronym would not be clear on second reference without this arrangement, do not use it.

Wrong: The English Language Center (ELC) provides excellent language instruction in a friendly, supportive atmosphere.

Right: **The English Language Center provides excellent language instruction in a friendly, supportive atmosphere. Students from all over the world have been coming to the ELC since 1978.**

Do not use initial caps for a phrase just because its letters form an acronym. Only use capital letters if the phrase is a proper noun.

Wrong: While Light-Emitting Diodes have been used in consumer electronics for decades, recently LEDs have begun replacing incandescent and fluorescent lights in some applications.

Right: **While light-emitting diodes have been used in consumer electronics for decades, recently LEDs have begun replacing incandescent and fluorescent lights in some applications.**

**ampersand** — Spell out the word *and* instead of using the ampersand symbol (&) in running text. Exceptions include Barnes & Noble at Vanderbilt, phrases such as "R&D" and corporate or institutional names that are generally abbreviated such as AT&T or Texas A&M. Note that there is no space on either side of the ampersand with these initialisms. Use the ampersand when it is part of a company's formal name, such as Johnson & Johnson, or when the ampersand is part of a composition title, such as *U.S. News & World Report*.

Avoid using an ampersand for College of Arts and Science or other Vanderbilt entities (except the bookstore).

**apostrophe** — OMITTED FIGURES: **The '20s were a rip-roaring time in American popular culture.** Note that there is no apostrophe before the *s* when referring to decades.

OMITTED LETTERS: **It's a great time to be alive; Don't step on my blue suede shoes; rock 'n' roll; gone fishin'.**

PLURALS OF A SINGLE LETTER: **Mind your p's and q's. In the introductory class, 15 students earned B's and 25 earned C's.**

Do not use with multiple-letter combinations unless they are abbreviations using periods. Example:

**List URLs at the end of news releases. Everyone in this office must learn the ABCs of media relations. The department awarded many Ph.D.'s last year.**

Be sure to use the apostrophe (which looks like a 9) and not the single open quote (which looks like a 6) or the footmark (which is straight, not curly).

Note that the apostrophe is not used to denote the plural of a personal name: **The Smiths and Campbells left Tuesday. The Joneses left Wednesday. The Edwardses left Thursday.**

See also **possessive**.

**capitalization** — HEADINGS AND TITLES: Capitalize the first and last word and all nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs (including forms of *be*, such as *is*), adverbs and subordinating conjunctions (*although*, *because*, *if*, *when*, etc.). A preposition functioning as an adverb should be capitalized: **Commodore Nation Tunes In to Follow the Team**. Lowercase articles (*the*, *a*, *an*), coordinating conjunctions (*and*, *but*, *or*, *for*, *nor*), and prepositions (*about*, *by*, *in*, *of*, *under*, *toward*, *through*, etc.) regardless of length, unless they are the first or last words. Lowercase the *to* in infinitives: **It Is Better to Give**. If the first element of a word is a prefix that could not stand by itself as a word, do not capitalize the second element unless it is a proper noun or proper adjective: **Co-director Jones Will Lead the Seminar, Pre-major Advisers Meet with New Students**.

For headlines and subheads on news releases, only the first word and proper nouns should be capitalized.

**colon** — The most frequent use of a colon is at the end of a sentence to introduce lists, tabulations, texts, etc.

FIRST WORD AFTER A COLON: Capitalize if a proper noun. *News Style* recommends capitalizing the first word if it is the start of a complete sentence. *Non-news Style* recommends lowercase in this instance, but capitalizing the first word if the colon is followed by two or more sentences, speech in dialogue, or an extract.

WITH LISTS: Do not use a colon to set off a list of single words or simple phrases. Do not use after forms of the verb "to be." A colon may be used to set off a bulleted list or a list composed of long phrases.

Example: **Other topics covered during the fellowship included: distance learning, training teachers to use technology and integrating technology into classrooms in a meaningful way.**

EMPHASIS: The colon can be used to add emphasis.

Example: **He had only one hobby: eating.**

**commas** — IN A SERIES: *News Style* uses commas to separate elements in a series, but does not put a comma before the conjunction: **The flag is red, white and blue**. Put a comma before the concluding conjunction in a series if an integral element of the series requires a conjunction. **I had orange juice, toast, and ham and eggs for breakfast. The School of Engineering, the College of Arts and Science, and Peabody College are involved in the new initiative.** In general, when in doubt, leave it out. *Non-news Style* recommends using the serial comma (the comma before the conjunction in a series): **The flag is red, white, and blue**.

IN COMPOUND SENTENCES: Use commas to separate independent clauses of a compound sentence: **The group has ambitious plans for expanding the volunteer services they provide, and members are actively recruiting among their peers.** Be careful to distinguish between a compound sentence (two or more independent clauses) and a compound predicate (two or more verbs having the same subject). Do not use a comma with a compound predicate. **She attended three meetings that morning and in the afternoon went to class.** (The subject of the sample sentence is *she* and the verbs are *attended* and *went*.)

WITH NAMES: Set off a title with commas but not the designations Jr. or II: **Kate Daniels, professor of English, is the chair of the committee. John Smith Jr. and Pat White II are also on the committee.**

WITH LOCATIONS: Use commas to set off the elements in addresses and names of geographical places or political divisions. **The people in Cincinnati, Ohio, are friendly.**

WITH DATES: When month day, and year are included in a date in running text, use commas before and after the year: **On June 8, 2016, all candidates were interviewed.** Do not use a comma if only the month and year are mentioned: **Five candidates were on campus in June 2016 for a series of interviews.**

**dash (em-dash)** — The em-dash expresses a pause, an abrupt change in thought or a parenthetical statement; it may be used instead of a colon to precede a list. It separates a word, phrase or clause from the rest of the sentence.

Example:

**Some parents started the day with high levels — they hit the ground running — while others had a blunted daytime cortisol level.**

**In every sense — educational, philosophical, practical — the partnership works.**

*Spacing, em-dash, News Style:* A space should separate a dash from the word preceding and the word following it. **Tumors require supply lines — new blood vessels — to support their growth and spread.**

*Spacing, em-dash, Non-news Style:* There should be no space on either side of the dash. **Tumors require supply lines—new blood vessels—to support their growth and spread.**

**dash (en-dash)** — In *Non-news Style*, the en-dash (which is half the length of an em-dash, but longer than a hyphen) is used to indicate a range or route (where it can stand for the word *to*). It may also express a connection between two things of equal weight (standing in for the words *and*, *to*, or *versus*).

Example:

Date and time ranges: **March–May, 1–2 p.m.**

Page ranges: **pp. 11–15**

Routes: **New York–London flight**

Two words of equal weight that are associated but shouldn't be hyphenated: **mother–daughter relationship**

Compound adjectives in which one of the parts of the compound is composed of more than one word or a hyphenated word: **Civil War–era document, pre–World War II policy, North Carolina–Virginia border, Pulitzer Prize–winning author, high–priority–high–pressure tasks**

Note that *News Style* does not use the en-dash. In the above instances, *News Style* would use a hyphen instead of an en-dash.

Do not combine a preposition with a dash when indicating a range.

Example:

Right: **The exhibit will be on display from March 2 through April 10.** Or: **The exhibit will be on display March 2–April 10.**

Wrong: The exhibit will be on display from March 2–April 10.

See also **hyphen**.

**ellipsis** — Three dots (periods) used to indicate a pause or to indicate word(s), sentence(s) or paragraph(s) omitted from quoted material.

*Spacing, News Style:* Ellipses should be preceded and followed by a space: **I ... have trouble ... collecting my thoughts.** If the words preceding an ellipsis constitute a grammatically complete sentence, a period should precede the ellipsis: **I had a very good time. ... But I wouldn't want to go back.**

*Non-news Style* recommends inserting space before and after the ellipsis and between each of the three ellipsis points: **I . . . have trouble . . . collecting my thoughts. I had a very good time. . . . But I wouldn't want to go back.**

**essential clauses and nonessential clauses** — An essential (or restrictive) clause is one that is essential to the meaning of the sentence, i.e., it identifies and/or specifies the subject. No comma should be used with an essential clause. A nonessential (or nonrestrictive) clause is not essential to the meaning of the sentence but provides additional information. In general, *that* introduces essential clauses and no comma is used. Use *which* to introduce nonessential clauses, and set off the clause with commas. *Nonessential clause: The book, which has a red cover, has sold many copies. Essential clause: The book that has a red cover has sold many copies. However, the book that has a blue cover is not selling well.*

See also **that vs. which**.

**exclamation point** — Use sparingly. Never use in a news release.

**headline** — For news releases, only the first word and proper nouns should be capitalized in headlines and subheads.

See also **capitalization** and **titles of works**.

**hyphen** — Hyphens are used inside words to separate their parts from each other. This includes using the hyphen between the parts of a compound word, where two or more words express a single concept.

COMPOUND MODIFIERS: When a compound modifier — two or more words that express a single concept — precedes a noun, use hyphens to link all the words in the compound except the adverb “very” and all adverbs that end in “-ly”: **a full-time job, a know-it-all attitude, a well-known person**. But: **federally funded research**.

WITH FRACTIONS: Use a hyphen when writing out fractions: **The measure requires a two-thirds vote to pass**.

SUSPENSIVE: **He received a 10- to 20-year sentence in prison. The camp is open for 8- to 12-year-old children**.

WITH TIME/DATE/NUMBER SPANS (*News Style*): Do not combine a preposition with a hyphen.

Right: **The exhibit will be on display from March 2 through April 10**. Or: **The exhibit will be on display March 2-April 10**.

Wrong: The exhibit will be on display from March 2-April 10.

Note that *Non-news Style* uses the en-dash for time/date/number spans instead of the hyphen.

See also **dash**.

**italics** — Italicize the names of books, journals, newspapers, magazines, named blogs, lecture series, art exhibits, individual works of art (paintings, drawings, photographs, statues, etc.), movies, television series, plays, complete musical works (e.g. symphonies), operas, music albums and the names of specific ships and other vessels.

Example:

**His book was reviewed in *Time* and *Chicago Sun-Times*.**

**Nashville Opera's artistic director John Hoopes will discuss Bizet's audience favorite *Carmen* at the Steve and Judy Turner Recital Hall.**

**Her favorite horror movie is Hitchcock's *Psycho*.**

**Last semester, Vanderbilt University Theatre performed Euripides' *Iphigenia*.**

**One of the items on display is a dollar bill signed by servicemen aboard the USS *Missouri*.**

Use italics when a word is used to signify the word itself instead of being used to convey the word's meaning.

Example:

**The word *strategy* appears 12 times.**

Do not italicize an apostrophe + s used at the end of a title to indicate the possessive case unless the possessive is part of the title

Example:

***Madame Bovary's* themes are revealed in this scene.**

Do not italicize familiar foreign words.

See also **capitalization, quotation marks, and titles of works.**

**lists** — RUN-IN LISTS: For a listing that runs in with text, use either numerals or italic letters within parentheses. **Data are available from three groups: (1) students attending the first session of the conference, (2) presenters for all sessions and (3) conference staff.** Generally a comma is sufficient to separate the items listed. Use a semicolon if the items themselves contain commas.

VERTICAL LISTS, BULLETED OR NUMBERED: Use a bulleted list if the order of the items is not significant; use a numbered list if the items are to be considered in a particular order.

Introduce the list with a grammatically complete sentence followed by a colon. Each entry in the list should begin with a capital letter whether or not the entry is a complete sentence. No period is required at the end of entries unless one or more of the entries is a complete sentence, in which case a period should be used at the end of all the entries. Items in a list should be syntactically similar; for example, each might begin with a verb ending in *-ing*.

Example:

**The coaches look for several characteristics when recruiting players:**

- **Talent and skill in the sport**
- **Sufficient academic preparation**
- **Positive attitude**

If a list completes the sentence that introduces it, then the items begin with lowercase letters, commas or semicolons are used to separate each item, and the last item ends with a period.

Example:

**A coach may be interested in recruiting a player if the athlete**

- **displays a solid understanding of the fundamentals of the sport,**
- **has sufficient academic preparation to meet the requirements of Vanderbilt classes,**
- **maintains a positive attitude.**

**parentheses** — Place a period outside a closing parenthesis if the material inside is not a sentence: **I will leave at noon (if I finish this punctuation guide)**. Place the period inside the closing parenthesis if the material inside is a complete sentence: **(This is an independent parenthetical sentence, and therefore the period comes before the closing parenthesis.)**

**period** — Primary use of a period is to mark the end of a declarative or imperative sentence. It should be followed by a single space. Periods always go inside quotation marks.

See also **ellipsis** and **parentheses**.

**plurals** — **PROPER NOUNS**: The plural is generally formed by adding *-s* or *-es*. This is true for proper names, as well. The apostrophe is not used to form the plural of proper nouns: Example: **The Joneses and the Smiths spent two cold Januarys in Michigan.**

**LETTERS AND NUMBERS**: Add *-s* to form the plural of numbers and capitalized multiple letters used as words: **two IOUs, six YMCAs, the 1960s, the '20s.**

Use apostrophe + *s* to form the plural of lowercase letters used as words, single capitalized letters used as words, and abbreviations with periods: **M.A.'s and Ph.D.'s, x's and y's, the three R's**

For plurals of proper nouns that include a generic term (that is, a common noun), lowercase the plural generic term: **Tennessee and Cumberland rivers, Warren and Moore colleges.** Or, when appropriate, repeat the generic term instead, and use uppercase: **Warren College and Moore College, Department of History and Department of Mathematics.**

**possessive** — Form the possessive of singular nouns by adding apostrophe + *s*: **teacher's building's, child's, witness's.**

Plural nouns ending in *s* form the possessive by adding an apostrophe: **teachers', buildings', witnesses'.**

Plural nouns not ending in *s* form the possessive by adding apostrophe + *s*: **children's, women's.**

**PROPER NOUNS**: According to *Non-news Style*, the rule for singular nouns applies to proper nouns, as well, regardless of the ending letter: **Dickens's novel, Burns's poetry.**

*News Style*, however, recommends using only an apostrophe to form possessive for singular proper names ending in *-s*: **Dickens' novel.** Either is correct, but do aim for consistency.

When a proper noun is set in italic type, the possessive ending is not set in italic. Example: **Some were surprised by *Newsweek's* cover.**

**quotation marks** — Use single quotation marks in news headlines and for quotes within quotes. "Smart" quotes, not "straight" quotes, should be used. Semicolons and colons go outside quotation marks. Periods and commas go inside the closing quotation mark.

Quotation marks are used for articles, poems, short stories, book chapters, essays, individual lectures, blog entries, TV and radio episodes (but a TV/radio program or series name is in italic), individual acts or scenes of plays, songs, and movements within a musical work. No quotation marks or italics are needed for academic course titles, apps, awards, websites, political documents (such as, the Constitution), scriptural works (such as, the Bible, the Koran, the Talmud), or musical compositions known by a generic name (such as, concerto, symphony).

**semicolon** — IN SERIES: Use semicolons to separate items in a series when the items use internal commas. A semicolon should be placed before the conjunction in such a series.

Example:

Previous winners of the Vanderbilt Prize in Biomedical Science are Ann Graybiel, Walter A. Rosenblith Professor of Neuroscience, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Elizabeth Blackburn, Morris Herzstein Endowed Professor in Biology and Physiology, University of California, San Francisco; and Nancy Andreasen, Andrew H. Woods Chair of Psychiatry, University of Iowa.

**spacing** — Punctuation marks, including periods and colons, should be followed by one space only.

**that vs. which** — In general, use *that* to introduce essential clauses, and do not precede *that* with a comma. Use *which* to introduce nonessential clauses, and set off the clause with commas. An essential (or restrictive) clause is one that is essential to the meaning of the sentence. A nonessential (or nonrestrictive) clause is not essential to the meaning of the sentence but provides additional information.

See also **essential clauses and nonessential clauses**.

**titles of works** — See chart below. In general, the title of a work that is part of a whole should be placed in quotation marks, while the title of the work in its entirety is italicized. Titles of long compositions are italicized; titles of short compositions are placed in quotation marks. Titles of books, journals, newspapers, magazines, named blogs, art exhibits, individual works of art (paintings, drawings, photographs, statues, etc.), movies, television series, plays, complete musical works (e.g. symphonies), operas and music albums should be italicized. Titles of book chapters, articles, newspaper columns, blog entries, poems, short stories, comic strips, lectures, songs and individual episodes in a television series should be placed in quotation marks. In news headlines, all titles should be placed in single quotes. **Do NOT refer to the AP Stylebook for guidance on titles.** Our style deviates.

See also **capitalization, italics, and quotation marks**.

Example:

The article "Cyberslacking" appeared in *Newsweek*.

*Casablanca* is a great flick.

My favorite episode of *Seinfeld* is "The Contest."

Frank Sutherland's "I Love Wine" column appeared weekly in *The Tennessean*.

*Catcher in the Rye* is a handbook for the cynical and disenchanted.

She downloaded the song "With or Without You" from U2's album *Joshua Tree*.

Employees often refer to the "Dilbert" comic strip for inspiration.

The play *The Meeting* is a fictional dialogue.



### At a Glance: Titles of Works

<b>Italics and headline-style caps:</b>	<b>Quotation marks and headline-style caps:</b>	<b>Headline-style caps, no quotation marks, no italics</b>
magazines journals newspapers blogs (named) books plays poetry anthologies television series music albums musical compositions identified by name art exhibits individual works of art (paintings, drawings, photographs, statues, etc.) movies lecture series	magazine articles journal articles newspaper articles and columns blog entries book chapters essays individual acts or scenes of plays poems short stories television episodes songs movements within a musical work individual lectures	apps websites (such as, Facebook, Google) political documents (such as, Constitution) scriptural works (such as, Bible, Koran, Talmud) musical compositions known by generic name (such as, concerto, symphony) awards academic courses