

*Writer's*

Winter 2012

STYLE GUIDE



Georgia State  
University®

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## WHY CONFORM?

The Georgia State University community takes pride in its great students, faculty, staff and alumni. Hundreds of offices and departments on campus produce their own memos, letters, brochures, posters, invitations, fliers, booklets, catalogs, magazines and newsletters. Writers and editors around the campus have their own priorities and objectives.

But every publication or website at Georgia State University has one thing in common, no matter where it originates: They can only be effective if they reflect consistency and clarity in their messages.

These publications often have one more thing in common — the reader. Many of our audiences overlap. One reader may receive an Andrew Young School of Policy Studies newsletter, an invitation from the Office of Development, The Milestones magazine, a brochure about the master of public management and policy and a letter from the dean of students — all in one week. Imagine the confusion if every publication treats the English language differently. It makes our readers wonder if we're really all talking about the same place — Georgia State University.

It's for the sake of our readers that we advocate using a clear, consistent, contemporary style of writing in non-academic documents, websites or publications originating from Georgia State University.

## GUIDELINES, NOT RULES

The English language gives us choices and decisions to make when we write. It defies any would-be “rule-maker” to dictate a single way to do it. This guide will not answer all your questions. It may not help you win an argument over which way to spell “website” or whether to hyphenate “email.” But it will give you a foundation upon which to base your own writing decisions.

And it will help you improve the clarity and consistency of communications coming out of your office or department.

We've assembled these guidelines using the Associated Press Stylebook as a primary “authority” because much of our writing is intended for external readers — prospective students and their parents, donors and prospective donors, government officials, business leaders, news reporters and editors and the public at large.

**DO NOT** apply these guidelines to technical or academic writing. Other sources can help you with this specialized kind of writing.

**DO** use this style guide to help you when you're writing anything (and everything) intended for the campus audience or for the public.

We appreciate your cooperation in using these guidelines. University-wide consistency in writing style builds the credibility of our publications, demonstrates our commitment to high-quality communications and greatly enhances our audiences' understanding of Georgia State University.

**Whatever style you follow**, remember that consistency and clarity are the keys to more effective communication. Make sure your preferred writing standards are consistent in all of your publications.

Just as use of the English language has changed over the years, this style guide will adapt and evolve, sometimes based on observations from people like you. If you have some rules, suggestions or pet peeves of your own about writing standards, share them with us by emailing [winman@gsu.edu](mailto:winman@gsu.edu).

# UNIVERSITY IDENTITY

## Name

### Georgia State University

Our national and international identity hinges on the words “Georgia State University.” Do not use the acronym “GSU.” Beyond our community of “insiders” this acronym is not well or universally recognized and outside of Georgia (and even within Georgia) may be confused with other institutions.

GSU may be used on social media and within athletics.

## Logo

The Georgia State University logo is a unit composed of two parts:

- the university name in specially modified type treatments (logotype)
- a graphic mark (flame)

The two parts of the logo — the mark and logotype — are always used together. Neither the mark nor the logotype may be manipulated or changed.

The graphic mark is an abstract representation of the letters G and S. But the function of this mark is not that it can be read as the school’s initials, but that it is a strong visual symbol that is easily recognized, remembered and associated with Georgia State University.

Further symbolism may be read into the mark. There is a flame-like aspect that can be seen as symbolizing both the traditional flame of knowledge as well as the mythical phoenix, the symbol of the post-Civil War resurrection of the city of Atlanta.

The Georgia State University logo is a registered trademark protected by federal law and should always have the registered trademark symbol ® with it.

Employees of the university can download the logo from the university’s digital asset library <http://commkit.gsu.edu/tools/dal/>. For more details, contact Ellen Powell, 404-413-1352, or Renata Irving, 404-413-1363, in Public Relations and Marketing Communications.



# UNIVERSITY IDENTITY

## Academic Degrees

Spell out and use the lower case: bachelor’s degree, master’s degree, doctor’s degree or doctorate.

You can receive a doctorate OR your doctor’s degree, but NOT your doctoral degree.

Abbreviate degrees and be sure to use periods after all the letters: B.A., M.S., Ph.D., M.S.I.A., B.F.A. (with the exception of MBA).

**Right:** He received a master’s degree in education.

**Right:** She received her master of science degree in biology.

**Right:** We awarded 99 doctor’s, 150 master’s and 900 bachelor’s degrees.

**Right:** She has an M.S. degree in technical writing.

**Right:** He earned a bachelor of music.

**Wrong:** He earned a bachelor’s of anthropology.

Do not precede a name with a title of an academic degree and follow it with the abbreviation for that degree.

Use Dr. in first reference as a formal title before the name of a person who holds a doctor of medicine degree.

Do not use Dr. before the names of individuals who hold other types of degrees, including those who hold honorary degrees only. References to honorary degrees must specify the degree was honorary.

**Right:** Carl V. Patton, Ph.D., was president of Georgia State University from 1992-2008.

**Right:** Carl V. Patton was president of Georgia State University from 1992-2008.

**Wrong:** Dr. Carl V. Patton, Ph.D., was president of Georgia State University from 1992-2008.

The last name may be used with no title at all, which is often preferable to maintain consistency.

## Acronyms

Generally, it’s fine to use acronyms if you feel they’re commonly recognized or if it helps avoid repetition. But always spell out the full name, title or phrase the first time you refer to it in text, followed immediately by the acronym in parentheses. Then use the acronym for each and every subsequent use. It is not necessary to note the acronym in parentheses if there is only one reference.

## UNIVERSITY IDENTITY

**Right:** The National Institutes of Health (NIH) awarded the grant to the research group. The NIH funded only three such centers in the nation.

**Right:** The College of Education received a science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) grant.

**Wrong:** The five-year research project is funded by the National Institute on Aging of the NIH.

### Addresses

These rules apply to addresses within body copy, not to addresses on envelopes.

Use the abbreviations Ave., Blvd., Rd., Dr. and St. only when you can include a numbered address.

**Right:** Send mail to 405 W. 25th St.

**Right:** Our office is on 25th Street.

Spell out all street names and use lower case when you're referring to more than one in a phrase.

**Right:** The park is at Courtland and Gilmer streets.

**Wrong:** The park is at Courtland and Gilmer Sts.

### Company Names

Follow their lead. Use Co. or Cos. or Inc. or Ltd. if it appears that way in the formal title of the organization.

When you refer to a company without its formal title, use the term "company," not "co."

Always spell out the word "company" in theatrical organizations.

For possessives: Ford Motor Co.'s profits.

Never use a comma before Inc. or Ltd. (*Follow the company's lead about other punctuation and the use of "&" or "and."*)

### Contractions

In most non-academic writing, contractions make your text easier to read, conveying a more conversational tone. Unless a more formalized construction helps emphasize the meaning of a sentence or phrase, use contractions and use them consistently.

You'll notice we've used contractions consistently in this publication, except for points of emphasis, as in "do not" instead of "don't."

## UNIVERSITY IDENTITY

### Georgia State University

Do not use the abbreviation "GSU." The idea is to proclaim the university's name, not obscure it. Some of your readers may use the term "GSU" themselves, but why minimize the recognition impact of the name Georgia State University?

The correct reference is to use "Georgia State University" the first time you refer to the title of the university in text. Upon second reference and thereafter, use "university." When writing for internal audiences familiar with the university, it is acceptable to refer to the university as GSU/Georgia State.

**Right:** Georgia State University is in Atlanta. The university was started in 1913.

Use lower case when using "the university" as a reference. The Associated Press style guide suggests using lower case when making a second reference to "the university."

### Headlines

Use title case in all headlines, which means capitalize the first word and all major words.

### Ph.D.

The preferred form for Ph.D. is to say a person holds a doctorate in (name their field of specialty). Second best is to say doctor's degree.

### Postal Abbreviations

Do not use postal abbreviations in your text. See States and Regions for preferred abbreviations of states.

**Right:** He's from Macon, Ga.

**Wrong:** He's from Macon, GA.

### Rev.

When used before an individual's name, precede it with "the."

**Right:** The Rev. Miller will speak at the assembly.

**Right:** The Reverend Miller will speak.

**Wrong:** Rev. Miller will be there.

**Wrong:** The Rev. will be there.

## States and Regions

Spell out the names of the 50 United States when they stand alone in text.

**Right:** Most students come from Georgia.

**Wrong:** We have 50 students from Fla.

Abbreviate, using AP, not postal rules, when citing a city and a state together. Some states must always be spelled out.

Ala.	Ga.	Maine	Neb.	Ohio	Texas
Alaska	Hawaii	Md.	Nev.	Okla.	Utah
Ariz.	Idaho	Mass.	N.H.	Ore.	Vt.
Ark.	Ill.	Mich.	N.J.	Pa.	Va.
Calif.	Ind.	Minn.	N.M.	R.I.	Wash.
Colo.	Iowa	Miss.	N.Y.	S.C.	W.Va.
Conn.	Kan.	Mo.	N.C.	S.D.	Wis.
Del.	Ky.	Mont.	N.D.	Tenn.	Wyo.
Fla.	La.				

Use Washington, D.C. Don't abbreviate to D.C. or, worse, DC.

**Right:** The conference is in Macon, Ga.

**Wrong:** The conference is in Macon, GA.

Do not use states with these U.S. cities:

Atlanta	Detroit	Minneapolis	Salt Lake City
Baltimore	Honolulu	New Orleans	San Antonio
Boston	Houston	New York City	San Diego
Chicago	Indianapolis	Oklahoma City	San Francisco
Cincinnati	Las Vegas	Philadelphia	Seattle
Cleveland	Los Angeles	Phoenix	Washington
Dallas	Miami	Pittsburgh	
Denver	Milwaukee	St. Louis	

Always spell out a state name if it's part of a title or name: The Georgia Department of Education.

## U.S./United States

We suggest using "United States" on first reference, rather than "U.S.," "USA" or "America," and be consistent with usage for the second reference and thereafter. The key is to choose one option and use it consistently. It can be confusing to jump from one to another.

## Academic Degrees

Use lower case when using bachelor's, master's or doctor's degree. Use lower case for doctorate or doctoral program.

## Academic Departments

Capitalize the names of departments except when used in a person's title.

**Right:** She is a senior in the Department of Political Science.

**Right:** The Department of English redesigned its website.

**Right:** The director of admissions is pleased with the number of applicants.

Use lower case for the word "department" when it stands alone.

**Right:** She's been with the department for three years.

**Right:** The Department of Astronomy hosts weekly viewing nights on university telescopes.

Capitalize the field when it's used to mean the department. Use lower case for the field when it's used in a general sense.

**Right:** She's a professor in the Department of Physics.

**Right:** She's a professor in the Physics Department.

**Right:** She's a physics professor.

**Right:** She majored in physics.

## Academic Majors

Use lower case for majors with the exception of languages, which are proper nouns.

**Right:** Her major is physics.

**Right:** He's an English major.

## Addresses

Capitalize formal street names, but use lower case when used with more than one street name in text. Use lower case when non-specific street words stand alone.

**Right:** Dahlberg Hall is on Courtland Street.

**Right:** Meet me at the corner of Gilmer and Courtland streets.

**Right:** The avenue is a dangerous street to cross.

# CAPITALIZATION

## Administrative Offices

Capitalize the names of departments, divisions and offices.

Use lower case for the words “department,” “division” or “office” when they stand alone.

Capitalize the field when it’s used to mean the department, division or office specifically. Do not capitalize the field when it’s used in general.

**Right:** He works in the Registrar’s Office.

**Right:** She works in student affairs. (the field)

**Right:** She works in the Student Affairs Office. (the university office)

**Right:** He works in Campus Planning. (the university office)

**Wrong:** The Division will release its report.

## a.m. / p.m.

Use lower case and periods for “a.m.” and “p.m.”

## Board of Regents

Upon first reference, use The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia. Use lowercase when board and regents are used separately.

Capitalize a regent’s title only when used before the name.

**Right:** He is a member of The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia.

**Right:** The board met at 9 a.m.

**Right:** Regent James Jolly addressed the issue.

**Right:** She is a regent.

**Right:** The Board of Regents will meet tomorrow.

**Wrong:** The board of regents will meet tomorrow.

## Buildings

All proper names of buildings, such as Student Center, should be capitalized. Special building projects, such as University Commons, should be capitalized. Terms such as “north wing” and “new residence hall” should not be capitalized, unless they are used in the title. Refer to the campus map for official building and location names.

## Centers and Institutes

The formal names of centers, such as the Fiscal Research Center or the Institute of Public Health, should be capitalized, but “center” by itself should be in lower case. The same rules apply to institutes. Upon second reference, it is not necessary to use the complete proper name.

# CAPITALIZATION

**Right:** The Institute of Public Health hosts seminars.

**Right:** The institute will welcome dozens of affiliates.

**Right:** The Student Recreation Center opened in 1996.

**Right:** The center has an exercise lounge and conditioning rooms.

## Cities and Towns

Use lower case for general sections of the city, but capitalize widely recognized names for city regions.

**Right:** The meetings will be downtown.

**Right:** Let’s go to a restaurant in Buckhead.

## Classes and Courses

Use lower case when you refer to classes and courses, unless you use the specific (and complete) title or the name carries a proper noun or numeral.

**Right:** I had a class in engineering management.

**Right:** I’m taking English 1101.

**Right:** I’m taking biology, Advanced Shakespeare and calculus.

## Commencement

Use lower case for “commencement” in text.

## Committees

Capitalize the formal names of groups and committees, such as Administrative Council, Planning and Development Committee and Staff Council. Use lower case for the words “committee” or “council” when they stand alone.

## Dean’s List

Always use lower case: the dean’s list.

## Fax

The suggested way to use this word in a sentence is in lower case. If you’re providing a fax number on your business card or in a listing, it’s okay to use an initial capital.

**Right:** Call or fax me with the information.

**Right:** Georgia State University  
College of Arts and Sciences  
Phone: 404-413-5114  
Fax: 404-413-5117

# CAPITALIZATION

## Homecoming

Use lower case for “homecoming” unless it’s used as a title.

## Honors

Use lower case and italicize *cum laude*, *magna cum laude* and *summa cum laude*.

## Hyphenated Words in Titles

A general rule of thumb is to always capitalize the first unit and capitalize the second unit if it’s a noun or adjective or if it has equal balance with the first unit.

**Right:** “Twentieth-Century Poets in South America” “City-States in Nineteenth-Century Europe” “Non-Christian Religions in North America”

The second unit should be in lower case if it’s a participle modifying the first unit or if both units constitute a single word.

**Right:** “English-speaking People throughout Asia” “Medium-sized Companies with Unions” “E-flat Minor Melody” “Re-establishing a Youthful Outlook” “Self-fulfilling Prophecies in Small-Town America”

## Government

Use lower case when the word “federal” is an adjective: federal court, the federal government.

## Race

Capitalize names of races (African-American, Caucasian, Asian, Native American), but do not capitalize “black” or “white” when referring to race.

## Regions

Region names are capitalized when they stand alone and are widely understood to designate a specific geographic area.

**Right:** western Georgia  
**Right:** the West Coast, the Midwest  
**Right:** the east coast of Florida, the midwestern United States  
**Right:** North Georgia, West Georgia, the Piedmont, Middle Georgia

# CAPITALIZATION

## Rooms

Capitalize only when used with a number, letter or name. In combination with a building name, use the number only.

**Right:** We’ll be in Room 100.  
**Right:** We’ll be in the training room.  
**Right:** The movie is in Sparks 110.

## Seasons

Capitalize only when used in a title or as part of a formal name. Use lower case when these words stand alone.

**Right:** fall semester, summer program  
**Right:** The program started in fall 2012.  
**Right:** The Spring Fling will be repeated this year.

## Semesters

Do not capitalize semesters in text.

**Right:** Spring Carnival takes place during the spring semester; homecoming occurs in the fall semester.

Georgia State uses these semester titles: fall, spring, summer, Maymester (always capitalize), and mini-mester.

## Social Security

Capitalize Social Security, but lower case number. Capitalize references to the Social Security Administration.

**Right:** Fill in your name and Social Security number.  
**Right:** The forms will be forwarded to Social Security.

## Student Classifications

Do not capitalize “freshman,” “sophomore,” “junior,” “senior,” “postdoctoral fellow” or “graduate student.” But do capitalize as a class designation or formal title.

**Right:** He’s a senior engineering major.  
**Right:** The Senior Class gift was the clock.



## CAPITALIZATION

### Titles

A person's title is capitalized only when used before the name. When using a capitalized title immediately before the name, try to keep it short. Do not capitalize an occupational designation, only a true title.

- Right:** We met President Becker.  
**Right:** The president will speak at the dinner.  
**Right:** Vice President for Student Affairs Douglass Covey issued the memo.  
**Right:** Our speaker will be primatologist Jane Goodall.

Titles following a person's name should appear in lower case. Use lower case when a title is used alone.

- Right:** The president of Georgia State University will address the group.  
**Right:** Timothy Renick, associate provost and chief enrollment officer, will host the reception.

For professors, only capitalize "professor" when beginning a sentence, not before the person's name. In titles, the term professor is used very specifically. The word should be used only in references to those who have official status as full professors. Otherwise, use the correct title of assistant or associate professor.

- Right:** Professor Jennifer McCoy is a full professor of political science.  
**Right:** ... said professor Jennifer McCoy in the Department of Political Science.  
**Right:** His years of hard work were acknowledged when he earned the rank of university professor.

Capitalize the official names of honorary chaired and university professorships. Use "the" to introduce named professorships.

- Right:** Kenneth Bernhardt, the Taylor E. Little Jr. Professor of Marketing, is a sought-after expert.  
**Right:** Regents' Professor Teryl Frey has received a Fulbright Scholarship.

### University System of Georgia

Capitalize University System of Georgia.

- Right:** The University System of Georgia comprises 35 colleges and universities.

## DATES, NUMBERS, PLACES

### Dates/Years

When a month is used with a specific date, use it this way:

Jan. 1	Feb. 1	March 1	April 1	May 1	June 1
July 1	Aug. 1	Sept. 1	Oct. 1	Nov. 1	Dec. 1

Spell out the name of the month when using it alone or with a year alone. When using a month and a year only, do not separate with commas. When a phrase is used with a month, date and year, set both the date and year off with commas.

- Right:** January 2012  
**Right:** Jan. 24  
**Right:** Jan. 13, 2012  
**Right:** He was born Jan. 13, 2012, in Macon, Ga.

When referencing a span of years, use a hyphen and drop the first two numbers of the second year. If the years span a century change, use all four numbers of the second year.

- Right:** 1979-81  
**Right:** 2002-04  
**Right:** 1979-2002

Do not use the word "on" before a date or day of the week when its absence would not lead to confusion.

- Right:** The meeting will be held Monday.  
**Right:** He will be inaugurated Feb. 22.  
**Right:** The program ends in December.

To describe sequences of dates or inclusive dates, use a hyphen (with no spaces between the hyphen and the characters) instead of the word "to" or "through."

- Right:** The box office is open Monday-Friday.  
**Right:** The performance will run Sept. 14-22.

Do not use suffixes with dates.

- Right:** Oct. 14  
**Wrong:** Oct. 14th

## DATES, NUMBERS, PLACES

Use an “s” without an apostrophe after the year to indicate spans of decades or centuries. Use an apostrophe before the year for class years or abbreviations to indicate the first two numbers of the year are omitted.

**Right:** The university was formed in the 1910s.

**Right:** She belonged to the Class of 1924.

**Right:** Shannon will graduate with the Class of '03.

**Wrong:** The '60s were famous for hippies, flower power and the peace movement.

When listing degrees with alumni names the preferred style is to use the year and degree abbreviation in parentheses. Do not place a comma between the year and the degree.

**Right:** Brad Ferrer (B.B.A. '81) spoke to the J. Mack Robinson College of Business graduating class of 2009.

An apostrophe after the year is needed for possessives.

**Right:** The presidential election was 1980's biggest news story.

### Fractions

Spell out fractions less than one, using hyphens between words and no spaces. Use figures for precise amounts larger than one, converting to decimals when appropriate.

**Right:** one-half, two-thirds

**Right:** 1.5 liters

**Right:** one and one-half liters

### Money

Use the dollar sign and numbers. Do not use a decimal and two zeros for whole dollar amounts.

**Right:** \$150

**Right:** \$150.25

**Wrong:** \$150.00

Use the comma in dollar amounts in the thousands.

**Right:** \$1,000

**Wrong:** \$1000

## DATES, NUMBERS, PLACES

For dollar amounts beyond thousands, use the dollar sign, number and appropriate word.

**Right:** \$14 million

**Wrong:** \$14,000,000

### Numbers

Spell out numbers from one to nine. Use numerals for all numbers 10 and above. Exceptions are noted below.

**Right:** nine poodles

**Right:** 16 buildings

**Right:** four miles

**Right:** He teaches ninth grade.

Use figures for ages, percentages, equipment specifications, page numbers and sums of money (when using the symbol “\$”).

**Right:** She has a daughter, 2, and a son, 8.

**Right:** 8 megabytes, 240 RAM

**Right:** According to the chart on page 4, nearly half of the elementary-age children in Georgia receive a \$5 weekly allowance.

Avoid starting a sentence with a number, but, if you must, spell out the number unless it's a year.

**Right:** Twenty students registered.

**Right:** 1914 was an important year.

### Percentages

Always use numerals (including the numbers 1-9) and spell out the word “percent” in text. “Percent” takes a singular verb when standing alone or when a singular word follows an “of” construction. Use a plural verb when a plural word follows an “of” construction.

**Right:** Only 8 percent of the class voted.

**Right:** He believes 50 percent is enough.

**Right:** He believes 60 percent of the membership is coming.

**Right:** He believes 60 percent of the members are coming.

Use the percent symbol (%) in charts or figures and in academic, statistical or technical writing.

## DATES, NUMBERS, PLACES

### Rankings

Always use the abbreviation No. when writing about rankings. Do not use the pound symbol (#).

**Right:** Georgia State University is ranked No. 1.

**Wrong:** Georgia State University is ranked #5.

### Telephone Numbers

If a publication is strictly for use on campus, you may omit the area code and first two digits. Use the “3” followed by the four-digit number.

**Right:** Call us at 3-3151.

If the publication may or will be sent off campus, include the area code as part of the complete number. Use a hyphen between the area code and number. When using telephone numbers for publication, you may wish to check for accuracy by calling the number before the final edit.

**Right:** 404-471-3151

**Wrong:** 404/471-3151

If you use more than one number, separate with the word “or” in text, or with a slash in an address listing. When providing telephone, fax, cell phone, etc., numbers in an address listing, identify each.

**Right:** Call me at 404-471-3151/2389.

Phone: 404-471-3151 Fax: 404-471-5812 Cell: 678-656-8139

### Time

Use lower case with periods for “a.m.” and “p.m.” When writing a time that falls on the hour, do not use “:00.” Simply state the hour with “a.m.,” “p.m.” or “o’clock.” Use “noon” and “midnight,” never 12 p.m. or 12 a.m.

**Right:** 3 p.m.

**Right:** 3-5 p.m.

**Right:** 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

**Right:** Noon-1 p.m.

**Right:** The concert begins at 8:30 p.m.

**Right:** The concert begins at 8 o’clock.

**Wrong:** 3:00 pm

**Wrong:** 3 p.m.-5 p.m.

**Wrong:** 12 noon

## PLURALS & POSSESSIVES

### Names

Form plurals of family names that end in “s” by adding “es.”

**Right:** The Jameses live in Inman Park.

**Right:** The James family lives in Inman Park.

Form plurals and possessives of proper names that end with “s,” “x” and “z” like this:

**Right:** Burns’ poems

**Right:** Marx’s theories

**Right:** Savitz’s holdings

Plural possessives combine the above rules:

**Right:** the Jones family’s reputation

**Right:** The Joneses’ reputation

### Plurals

Form plurals of the following by adding “s” alone:

**Right:** dos and don’ts

**Right:** CDs

**Right:** M.A.s and Ph.D.s

**Right:** The three Rs

**Right:** the early 1920s

**Right:** several YMCAs

**Right:** CODs and IOUs

**Right:** in twos and threes

Form plurals of the following by adding ‘s:

**Right:** S’s, A’s and I’s

**Right:** x’s and o’s

**Right:** SOS’s

# PUNCTUATION PRIMER

## City, State

Place a comma between the city and the state name, and another comma after the state name, unless ending a sentence.

**Right:** They moved from Tucson, Ariz., to Athens, Ga.

**Right:** Kansas City, Mo., is the site of the conference.

**Right:** Washington, D.C., was the destination.

**Wrong:** Kansas City, Mo. is the site of the conference.

## Colons, Semicolons

Use a colon at the end of a sentence to introduce lists and after an introductory statement that uses the words “as follows” or “the following.” Do not use a colon between a verb or preposition and its direct object.

**Right:** They asked everyone: her sister, brother, cousin and mother.

**Right:** They asked others, such as her sister, brother, cousin and mother.

**Right:** They will talk about the following: (1) admissions criteria; (2) financial aid; and (3) student activities.

**Right:** The topics were leadership, motivation, enthusiasm and creativity.

**Wrong:** The topics were: leadership; motivation; enthusiasm; creativity.

Use a semicolon to divide the two parts of a compound sentence (two independent clauses) when the clauses are not connected by a conjunction.

**Right:** We already received your report; the follow-up mailing is not needed.

A semicolon also connects two independent clauses that use a connecting word like “therefore” or “however.”

**Right:** We already received your report; therefore, the follow-up mailing is unnecessary.

## Commas

Do not use a comma before “and” in a simple listing. Use a comma only if the last item is a compound idea that requires “and” as part of the item.

**Right:** The flag of the United States is red, white and blue.

**Right:** The restaurant offered pancakes, french toast, and ham and eggs.

Do not use a comma before “Jr.” or “Sr.” after a person’s name.

**Right:** John Smith Jr.

**Right:** John Smith IV

**Right:** Thurston Howell III

# PUNCTUATION PRIMER

Use a comma to introduce a complete, one-sentence quotation within a paragraph. A colon should be used to introduce longer quotations.

**Right:** She said, “I don’t want to go.”

**Right:** She said: “I don’t want to go. I’m tired. The cat’s sick, and I have no interest in post-modern art.”

Do not use a comma at the start of a partial or indirect quotation.

**Right:** She said the play “was the finest drama Williams wrote.”

**Wrong:** She said the play, “was the finest drama Williams wrote.”

Omit the comma before “of” in writing a person’s name and address.

**Right:** Robert Redford of Sundance, Utah

**Wrong:** Robert Redford, of Sundance, Utah

Watch for missing commas. If you’re using an interruptive clause with a comma at the end, you’d better check and insert the comma at the beginning.

**Right:** Dr. Becker, president of Georgia State University, spoke at the meeting.

**Right:** Executives, such as Mr. Brown and Ms. Smith, also attended.

**Right:** Executives such as Mr. Brown and Ms. Smith also attended.

**Right:** She drove from Tacoma, Wash., to Atlanta.

**Right:** The car, which was silver, raced down the road.

**Wrong:** Dr. Becker, president of Georgia State University spoke at the meeting.

**Wrong:** Executives such as Mr. Brown and Ms. Smith, also attended.

**Wrong:** She drove from Tacoma, Wash. to Austin.

**Wrong:** The car, which was silver raced down the road.

**Wrong:** The car which was silver raced down the road. (See That/Which entry on page 34)

## Company Names

Use Co. or Cos. when a business uses either word at the end of its proper name. If “company” or “companies” appears alone in the second reference, spell the word out.

For possessives: Ford Motor Co.’s profits.

Spell out the names of theatrical organizations.

Never use a comma before Inc. or Ltd.

## Dangling Modifiers

Avoid dangling or misplaced adverbs or adjectives.

**Right:** Walking across the lawn, I got mud on my shoes.

**Wrong:** Walking across the lawn, mud covered my shoes. (In this construction, mud is walking across the lawn.)

## Dates

Omit comma between month and year if no date is included.

**Right:** Dec. 12, 2000

**Right:** December 2000

## Em dash (—)

Used to set off parenthetical statements with emphasis. There should be a space on either side of the em dash.

**Right:** That is — by far — the worst accident I've seen.

## Exclamation Points

Use them rarely.

## Hyphenation

In general, many two-word phrases are two separate words when used as a noun, verb or adverb but take a hyphen when used as an adjective. Double check the way the word(s) is (are) being used in your sentence. As a rule, phrases after the verb are not hyphenated.

Adverbs ending in -ly are usually not hyphenated.

**Right:** newly renovated

**Wrong:** commonly-held belief

To hyphenate in a series, follow this example:

**Right:** He wrote 10- and 20-page papers.

**Right:** Georgia State University beat Old Dominion University, 21-14.

Clarifying common confusions:

## A

all-terrain

## B

bilingual

## C

co-chair, co-sponsor, coed, child care, cooperative (adjective), co-op (noun), course work (noun), class work (noun)

## D

data base or database (choose one and use it consistently), decision-maker (noun), decision making (verb), decision-making (adjective)

## E

extracurricular

## F

follow-up, full-time employee (adjective), she works full time (adverb), fund raising is difficult (noun), the fund-raising campaign (adjective), We are holding a fund-raiser (event), He is a fund raiser (person)

## I

interoffice, inter-related

## L

lifestyle, long-range (adjective: The long-range plans are astounding), long range (adverb: The ideas cover a long range), long-term (adjective: The long-term system will be in effect for many more years), long term (adverb: The results will be firm and long term)

## M

mainframe, microcomputer, multimedia, multipurpose

## N

nonprofit

## O

on-campus movies (adjective), There are movies on campus each week (preposition and noun)

### P

part-time job (adjective), Part time is the best option (noun), percent, playoffs, postdoctoral, postgraduate, pre-application, preschool (For the use of hyphenation with the prefixes “post” and “pre,” please consult your dictionary.)

### R

re-evaluate, reinforce (In general, use a hyphen when the vowel “e” follows the prefix “re.” There are exceptions and additions. Consult your dictionary to be sure.)

### S

semicolon

### T

time-sharing (all computer-related uses)

### V

vice president, vice chair

### W

world-renowned school (adjective), The school is world renowned.

### Introductory Phrases

Introductory phrases such as “Last year” and “In 2001” do not require commas.

**Right:** Last year the board approved a tuition increase.

**Right:** In 2009 Mark Becker became the university’s seventh president.

**Wrong:** In 2009, Mark Becker became the university’s seventh president.

### Quotes and Quotations

Follow these rules when using quotes and quotation marks:

The period and the comma always go inside the quotation marks.

**Right:** She told us “stay in school,” which was good advice.

**Right:** He said, “I’m going to the store.”

**Wrong:** He said, “I’m going to the store”.

The dash, the exclamation point and the question mark go inside the quotation marks when they apply to the quote only. When they apply to the whole sentence, they go outside the marks.

**Right:** Sgt. Carter gave the following order: “Peel potatoes — then lights out!”

**Right:** Gomer Pyle said, “Golly, Sergeant!” when he heard the news.

**Right:** Francis Schaeffer’s book asks, “How Shall We Then Live?”

**Right:** What did Martin Luther King Jr. mean when he said, “I have a dream”?

**Note:** This usage prevails in the United States. United Kingdom and Canada apply different rules. The colon and semicolon should be placed outside quotation marks. When text ending with one of these punctuation marks is quoted, the colon or semicolon is dropped.

**Right:** The president said the plan needed “a few minor adjustments”; however, he did not reject it entirely.

In running quotations, each new paragraph should begin with open quotation marks (no closing marks). Only the final paragraph should contain the closing quotation mark.

**Right:** The speech was as follows: “Welcome, ladies and gentlemen. I have a few points to make today. The first is to thank you for this honor. My accomplishments are noteworthy only in so far as they help to advance this important field of human endeavor.

“The second is to ask you to continue thinking about this critical issue. Only through continued research and experimental programs such as the one you’ve recognized today will we advance our cause and improve our society.

“Finally, let me ask you to do more than turn your mental energies to this important effort. Give your total energies — in the form of financial support, volunteer time, active advocacy — for the sake of progress. Then we can all share in this special honor. Thank you.”

When including a quote or “highlighted” word inside another quotation, use single quotes (‘’) instead of double (“”).

**Right:** In his charge to the committee, the chair said, “I have often told you, ‘don’t give up the ship.’ Thanks to your efforts, we’ve been able to reach our goal.”

**Right:** The chair said, “I have often told you, ‘don’t give up the ship.’”

### Spacing at End of Sentence

Use a single space at the end of a sentence and after a colon. Double spaces date back to the days of typewriters, when all characters were allotted the same amount of space. Computerized typesetting adjusts the spacing for a good fit. Extra spaces create gaps and look unprofessional.

### People With Disabilities

Do not focus on disability unless it is crucial to a story. Always put people first, not their disability. Emphasize abilities, not limitations. Show people with disabilities as active participants of society.

### Ethnic Sensitivities

Always ask individual preference.

**African-American/black:** It's acceptable to use these interchangeably to describe black people in the United States. When referring to a specific individual, use the term he or she prefers.

**American Indian/Native American:** The two terms are synonymous. Some indigenous people in the United States prefer "American Indian" to "Native American." It's best to use individual preference, if known. When possible, use national affiliation rather than the generic "American Indian" or "Native American," for example, Navajo, Hopi, Cherokee. To specify someone was born in the U.S., but isn't Native American, use native-born.

**Asian, Asian-American:** Use "Asian" when referring to anyone from Asia, but use "Asian-American" when specifically referring to those of Asian ancestry who are American citizens.

**Mexican-American, Hispanic, Latino/Latina:** Use "Mexican" when referring to anyone of Mexican citizenship, and use "Mexican-American" when referring to those of Mexican ancestry who are permanent residents or citizens of the United States. "Hispanic" and "Latino/Latina" are umbrella terms referring to a person whose ethnic origin is in a Spanish-speaking country, as well as residents or citizens of the United States with Latin American ancestry.

Adapted from the News Watch Diversity Style Guide.

### Religious/Ethnic Holidays

To respect the wide variety of religions on our campus, use "holiday party" rather than "Christmas party" and "winter break" rather than "Christmas break."

### Fraternities/Sororities

Use the preferred references: fraternities and sororities. The term "Greeks" or "Greek organizations" is okay. Don't use the term "frats."

### Gender Sensitivities

Our recommendation is to take a little extra time to construct your sentences so you can avoid having to use gender-specific terms. For example, by using plural pronouns ("they," "their"), you can avoid having to use the awkward but gender sensitive construction "he/she" or "his/her."

Instead of "chairman," use "chair." Instead of "waiter/waitress," use "server." Instead of "mailman," use "postal carrier." It's also becoming more common to see the term "actor" used for men and women.

### Sexual Orientation

**gay/lesbian:** "Gay" is acceptable and preferable as a synonym for homosexuals, primarily males. "Lesbian" is preferred for women. When possible, use "gay and lesbian." It's best to use "gay" as an adjective, not a noun, for example, "gay man," "gay people." Where space is an issue, "gay" is acceptable to include both gays and lesbians.

**gay lifestyle:** Avoid this term. There is no one gay lifestyle, just as there's no one heterosexual lifestyle.

**gay relationships:** Gay, lesbian and bisexual people use various terms to describe their commitments. If possible, ask the individual what term he or she prefers. Otherwise, "partner" is generally acceptable.

**homosexual:** This is the medical/clinical term for lesbians and gays. (adj.) Of or relating to sexual and affectional attraction to a member of the same sex. (n.) A person who is attracted to members of the same sex. "Gay" or "lesbian" is the preferred term in all contexts, except clinical.

**LGBTQA:** Acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning and ally communities.

Adapted from the News Watch Diversity Style Guide.

**transgender (adj):** An umbrella term that refers to people whose physical, sexual characteristics may not match their gender identity. Use the name and personal pronouns that are consistent with how the individual lives publicly. When possible, ask which term the subject prefers. As a noun, use "transgender people."

## General Rules

For simplicity and clarity, put quotation marks around the official titles of books, chapters of books, movies, plays, poems, songs, television shows, episodes of television shows, magazine articles, speeches, research papers and projects.

## Academic Papers

The title of an academic paper or journal article should be put inside quotation marks. If the journal is then named, use italics or underlining for the name of the journal.

**Right:** His paper, “The Rhetoric of Neo-Classic Poets,” was published in *Classical Literature Quarterly*.

## Books

Use quotations for book titles (including textbooks), unless they’re reference books such as almanacs and dictionaries. Use italics (or underlining) for titles of books that are collections of works or proceedings (including journals). Use quotations for book chapters or individual selections.

**Right:** An excellent source for writers is “The Elements of Style” by Strunk and White.

**Right:** You’ll find a copy of *Encyclopedia Britannica* in my library at home.

**Right:** In the text, *Collection of Great American Short Stories*, my favorite is “The Hills Are Like White Elephants.”

## Courses

Capitalize the main words in the title of courses; quotation marks or italics are not necessary.

## Magazines/Newspapers

Capitalize the name but do not place it in quotations or italics. Do not capitalize “magazine” unless it’s part of the publication’s title or masthead.

**Right:** Time magazine, Newsweek magazine, The Alcalde magazine

Capitalize the word “the” only if it’s part of the periodical’s title.

**Right:** The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post

When listing several publications or periodicals, lower case the initial “the” and eliminate additional references of “the” from the list.

**Right:** We read the New York Times, Daily News and Wall Street Journal every morning.

## Movies/Theater/TV/Radio

Put quotation marks around the titles of movies, plays, television shows and episodes and radio shows.

**Right:** Georgia State University alumnus Scott Teems (B.A. ’99) is reaping awards for his directorial debut, “That Evening Sun,” starring Oscar nominee Hal Holbrook.

## Music

Capitalize but do not use quotation marks around descriptive titles for orchestral works. If a work has a special title, use quotation marks around it.

**Right:** Bach’s Suite No. 1 for Orchestra

**Right:** Mozart’s “The Magic Flute”



New terms and variations emerge rapidly. In making these judgments, we have referred to The Associated Press Stylebook as our guide.

## Frequently Used E-terms

dial up (verb)	log out (verb)
dial-up (adjective) account	logout (noun)
email (no hyphen)	multimedia (one word, no hyphen)
Internet (capital "I")	Net (capital "N," no apostrophe)
intranet (lowercase "i")	offline (one word, no hyphen)
log in (verb)	online (one word, no hyphen)
login (noun)	website (one word, lowercase "w")

## URL

It's not necessary to include `http://` at the beginning of a link. Consider linking a phrase, rather than writing out a URL, however.

**Right:** `www.gsu.edu`

**Wrong:** `http://www.gsu.edu`

## Web Words

Although references to the Web itself use a capital W, these Web-based words use a lower case w.

<b>webcast</b>	A live broadcast on the Web
<b>webmaster</b>	The creator of a site
<b>webzine</b>	Media of the Web and for the Web

## Common Acronyms

CC	carbon copy (BCC - blind carbon copy)	ISP	Internet service provider
CD	compact disc (plural - CDs)	JPEG	joint photographic experts group
dpi	dots per inch (lower case, never spelled out)	LAN	local area network
EPS	encapsulated postscript	OOP	object-oriented programming
FAQ	frequently asked questions	RAM	random access memory
FPS	frames per second	ROM	read-only memory
FTP	file transfer protocol	RSI	repetitive strain injury
GIF	graphic interchange format	TCP/IP	transmission control protocol/Internet protocol
GUI	graphical user interface (plural - GUIs)	TIFF	tagged image file format
HTML	hypertext markup language	WAN	wide area network
IP	Internet protocol		

Georgia State University refers to The Associated Press Stylebook as our guide for common social media terms.

## aggregator

A website or feed that amasses content from other sources and assembles it in a form digestible to its users.

## API

Abbreviation for application programming interface.

## app

Short for application.

## avatar

A version of yourself that you put forward in an online or video game setting. Sometimes bears a strong resemblance to the user; at other times, it is used to act out fantasies of a wished-for identity.

## blog

A website where short entries are usually (but not always) presented in reverse chronological order, with the newest entry first.

## Bluetooth

A standard for short-range wireless transmissions, such as in headsets, that enable hands-free use of cellphones.

## capitalization

Normal conventions of capitalization are often ignored in IM and text messages because the use of the shift key slows down letter entry.

## check in

(v.), check-in (n. and adj.) When using a location-based social networking tool, such as Foursquare, the act of sharing a location via a mobile device.

## click-thrus

A way of measuring how many people click a link online to see its destination site. Click-thrus are often used to set advertising rates.

## cloud

The collection of data and use of related computing services via remote servers accessed through the Internet.

## crowdsourcing

The practice of asking a large collection of individuals online to help gather information or produce ideas.

### curate

The practice of selecting, packaging and presenting content to the public online in a more personal and hand-picked way, as opposed to automated news feeds. Often used in conjunction with social media.

### direct message (DM)

A personal message sent via Twitter to one of your followers. DMs differ from mentions and @ replies in that they can only be seen by the sender and recipient.

### download

To get information from another server or computer.

### e-book

The electronic, non-paper version of a book or publication, sold digitally and commonly consumed on an e-book reader or e-reader, such as Amazon's Kindle.

### emoticon

A typographical cartoon or symbol generally used to indicate mood or appearance, as :- ) and often looked at sideways. Also known as smileys.

### end user

(n.), end-user (adj.) A phrase commonly referred to by technology developers when imagining the audience for an application, software or hardware. End-user experience.

### e-reader

Or e-book reader.

### Facebook

The world's most popular social media service. Users communicate with friends and other users via private and public messages. Posted profiles, photos, lists of personal interests and privacy settings are key elements.

### feed

A stream of constantly updated material.

### Foursquare

A location-based service. Users check in at certain places or businesses, collect rewards for visits and track friends who use the service.

### friend, follow, like

Acceptable as both nouns and verbs. Actions by which users connect to other users on social networks. Friend and like (formerly fan) are typically used on Facebook, while Twitter users follow and have followers.

### geolocation

The association of your virtual location with your physical location.

### geotagging

The act of adding geographical metadata to pieces of media or social media updates.

### Google, Googling, Googled

Google is a trademark for a Web search engine.

### Google Plus

A social network owned by Google in which users can share text updates, videos, photos or other content, and organize fellow users into circles based on relationships or other factors.

### handle

A self-selected, public-facing username on a social network, particularly Twitter. May be used interchangeably with username.

### hashtag

The use of a pound sign (#) in a tweet to convey the subject a user is writing about so that it can be indexed and accessed in other users' feeds.

### IM

Abbreviation for instant message; sometimes used as a verb: IMing, IMed.

### Internet TV

A television set that can be connected directly to the Internet and displays Web content without going through a computer.

### iPad

A trademark for a brand of tablet. Use iPad when the word starts a sentence or headline. See tablet.

### iPhone

Apple Inc.'s smartphone. Use iPhone when the word starts a sentence or headline.

### keywords

Terms used to define an online search or embed in a file so that it becomes searchable.

### LinkedIn

A social media site used mainly for professional networking. Users create contact networks for information exchanges, job searches and business opportunities.

### link shortener

A tool that allows users to shorten a longer URL to make it easier to share. Bit.ly and TinyURL are two link shorteners.

### live-blog

Snippets of information about a particular event that are posted online in real time, usually in reverse chronological order, with the newest entry first. Used as a noun or verb.

### mashup

A combination of two or more pieces of content, such as photos or video, used to create something new. For example, a video that blends audio from a song with footage from several movies to build a new storyline.

### mention

On Twitter, an @ mention tags an account in a tweet someone else is publishing. It often appears in place of the actual name. Example: I refer to the @APStylebook as I edit stories.

### metadata

Data about data.

### microsite

A tightly focused group of Web pages typically dedicated to a single topic, product or service.

### modified tweet

A tweet amended before forwarding uses the abbreviation MT.

### Myspace

A social network site similar to Facebook.

### removal of punctuation, characters

It is acceptable in instant-message and texting conventions to remove punctuation and characters, most often vowels, to save time typing or thumbing in letters.

### reply

On Twitter, an @ reply is a common technique used to speak to other people directly.

### retweet (RT)

The practice, on Twitter, of forwarding a message or link from someone else to your followers. Users can either formally retweet to make the forwarded message appear exactly as written by the original user or use the informal convention of “RT @username:” to share the tweet and edit or add comment. Spelled out in all references, though common usage on Twitter abbreviates to RT. If you amend the tweet before forwarding, use the abbreviation MT for “modified tweet.”

### RSS

An abbreviation for Really Simple Syndication.

### scraping, mirroring

The method of copying video, photo or audio content from an account and reposting it to a different one.

### search engine optimization

Any of a number of methods, both informal and algorithmic, used to ensure that online content shows up in search engines such as Google, thus increasing traffic to the content. SEO is acceptable on second reference.

### smartphone

An advanced mobile device, such as an iPhone, that can be used to check email, browse the Web and download applications.

### social media

Online tools that people use to connect with one another, including social networks.

### social media optimization

Any of a number of methods, mostly informal, used to ensure that online content is shared on social networks, thus increasing click-thru traffic to the originating website. SMO is acceptable on second reference.

### social networks

Online networks such as Facebook or Twitter where people share personal and professional information and content, and connect with friends and colleagues.

### status

A short string of words used on social networks to alert followers to a user's recent activities or point them to something of interest.

### **streaming**

A method of processing and delivering media in real time over the Internet. Videos on YouTube are an example of streaming content, as are many on-demand services like Netflix and Hulu.

### **subscribe**

A method of keeping track of public updates from Facebook users without necessarily adding them as a friend. The feature must be enabled by a user to allow users to subscribe to his or her updates.

### **tablet**

A touch-screen device, such as an iPad or Kindle Fire, that can be connected to the Internet via Wi-Fi or cellular data networks.

### **tag**

To identify someone or something in a post or piece of content. Photos are often tagged to identify people and objects in them.

### **text messaging, instant messaging**

Increasingly, terms and symbols used in text and instant messaging are showing up in quotations and regular written exchanges. The following are a selection of the most popular symbols, terms and abbreviations used in texting and IMing. Many are also used in social media updates. The numeral 2 is shorthand for to or too, as in I have something 4 U 2.

### **trending**

Used to indicate that a particular topic is getting a lot of attention on a social network, search engine or website.

### **Tumblr**

A blogging platform.

### **Twitter**

A message-distribution system that allows users to post continual updates of up to 140 characters detailing their activities for followers or providing links to other content. The verb is to tweet, tweeted. A Twitter message is known as a tweet.

### **unfollow**

To remove an account from the list of accounts that populate a feed, usually on Twitter. Note that unfollowing on Twitter is a one-way action: I may unfollow you, but you may continue to follow me.

### **unfriend**

To remove someone from a list of friends, usually on Facebook.

### **user interface**

The features of a device, program or website that enable control by a human. UI is acceptable on second reference. Also called user experience or UX.

### **VoIP**

Voice over Internet Protocol. A method of transmitting sound as data over the Internet, allowing for inexpensive phone conversations. VoIP is acceptable on second reference.

### **WAP**

Wireless Application Protocol. A standard that allows users to access information on mobile devices.

### **website**

A location on the World Wide Web that maintains one or more pages at a specific address.

### **widget**

A small module with a specific purpose that appears on a website, desktop or other interface and allows access to content or functions.

### **wiki**

Software that allows a group of users to add, delete, edit and share information on an intranet or Internet website.

### **Wikipedia**

An online encyclopedia whose entries are created and edited by its users, regardless of a person's expertise. May contain useful links but should not be used as a primary source of information.

### **YouTube**

A video-serving network owned by Google that allows users to upload their own videos for access by anyone with a network connection.

### Common Rules

#### Alumni

This word construction is taken directly from its Latin origins. Therefore, the noun forms are gender specific: “alumna” refers to one woman; “alumnae” refers to women; “alumnus” refers to one man; “alumni” refers to men or men and women. It’s rare to see the feminine plural form, “alumnae.” Most often the form “alumni” is used for any group of graduates. Also, “alumnus” can refer to anyone who attended a school, not just one who graduated.

#### Alumni Abbreviations

Identify past and current students by using the abbreviation for the alum’s academic degree with the last two digits of the graduation year. It is important that the apostrophe points in the correct direction: down and to the left.

**Right:** Former State Senator David Adelman (M.P.A. ’95) serves as United States Ambassador to Singapore.

**Right:** Jay Bernath (MBA ’92) is president of the Georgia State University Alumni Association.

If a person received more than one degree from Georgia State University, use both years and put a comma between them.

**Right:** Randy Patterson (B.B.A. ’98, MBA ’01) is vice president of human resources at Recall, a records management company.

#### Collective Nouns

The collective nouns “faculty” and “staff” are singular nouns. If you wish to use a plural construction, use “members of the faculty/staff” or “faculty/staff members.”

**Right:** The staff is represented by the Staff Council.

**Right:** Members of the faculty are dedicated researchers and teachers.

**Right:** Staff members disagree among themselves about the best benefits options.

**Right:** Georgia State offers staff many training opportunities.

#### Passive Voice

Avoid using the passive voice, which can contribute to imprecise, weak or wordy prose.

Think about this sentence: “Jane’s classes were taught in the morning.” Taught by whom? Is Jane a teacher or a student? An active construction would clarify the sentence: “Professor Smith taught Jane’s morning classes.”

When a passive construction makes an appearance in an early draft, think about the sentence. Try to alter the construction and choose an active verb. Concise sentences with active verbs and a few carefully selected modifiers communicate most clearly to the reader.

**Passive:** The program is activated with a key by the engineer.

**Active:** The engineer activates the program with a key.

Sometimes passive voice is a better choice. For example, when the recipient of an award is more important than the awarding body, it’s better to keep this information in the lead of the sentence: “Jimmy Carter was the spring commencement speaker.”

#### That/Which

These words cause so much confusion that they deserve a section of their own. “That” and “which” often are used incorrectly in clauses.

When referring to a human being (or an animal with a name), any clause should be introduced by the word “who” or “whom.”

When referring to an object or nameless animal with an essential clause — one that cannot be eliminated without changing the meaning of the sentence — use the word “that” to introduce the clause. Essential clauses do not need commas.

When referring to an object or nameless animal with a non-essential clause — one that can be eliminated from the sentence without changing the basic meaning — use the word “which” to introduce the clause. If non-essential clauses appear in the middle of sentences, they may need to be set off by commas.

A simple test: Once your sentence is written, try reading it without the clause. If the sentence still means about the same thing, your clause should be introduced by “which.” If taking out the clause changes the meaning drastically, it should be introduced by “that.”

**Right:** The club meeting, which was held at the University Center, was cancelled.

**Meaning:** The club meeting was cancelled. (We must already know which club meeting it is.)

- Right:** The club meeting that was held at the University Center was cancelled.
- Meaning:** The only meeting being held at the University Center was cancelled. (Another way to think of essential clauses — you don't really need the word "that.")
- Better:** The club meeting held at the University Center was cancelled.

### Commonly Misused Words

#### adverse/averse

"Adverse" means unfavorable. "Averse" means reluctant.

#### adviser/advisor

"Adviser" is preferred although both are correct. Whichever you choose to use, be consistent throughout your document. "Advisor" is acceptable for proper name.

#### affect/effect

"To affect" means (1) to influence, change or produce an effect; (2) to like to do, wear or use; or (3) to pretend. "To effect" means to accomplish, complete, cause, make possible or carry out. If you're looking for a noun, you're probably looking for "effect." If you're using a verb, you're safest with "affect."

#### afterward

not afterwards

#### all right

not alright

#### allude/refer

"To allude" means to speak of without mentioning. "To refer" means to speak of directly.

#### allusion/illusion

An "allusion" is an indirect reference. An "illusion" is a false impression or image.

#### alumna/ae

An alumna is one woman. Alumnae are women.

#### alumni/us

Alumni are men or men and women. An alumnus is one man.

#### around/about

"Around" should refer to a physical proximity or surrounding (I'll look for you around the front of University Commons). "About" indicates an approximation (Let's have lunch at about 11:30 a.m.).

#### beside/besides

Use "beside" to mean (1) at the side of (sit beside me); (2) to compare with (beside other studies); or (3) apart from (that's beside the point). Use "besides" to mean (1) furthermore (besides, I said so); (2) in addition to (and elm and maple trees besides); or (3) otherwise (there's no one here besides Bill and me).

#### between/among

Use "between" to show a relationship between two objects only. Use "among" when it's more than two.

"Between" takes an objective pronoun — me, her, him. "Between you and me" is okay. "Between you and I" is not.

#### biannual/biennial

"Biannual" is twice a year. "Biennial" is every two years.

#### CampusID

The Georgia State account name for signing into technology is a single word, without a space.

#### complement/compliment

"Complement" is something that supplements. "Compliment" is praise or the expression of courtesy.

#### compose/comprise/constitute

"Compose" is to create or put together. "Comprise" is to contain, to include all or embrace. "Constitute" is to make up, to be the elements of.

#### Examples:

The whole comprises the parts. The parts constitute the whole. The whole is composed of parts.

The department comprises 12 people. Twelve people constitute the department. The department is composed of 12 people.

#### continual/continuous

"Continual" is a steady repetition. "Continuous" is uninterrupted.

#### criteria

plural (more than one criterion, which is a quality, a value or a standard of judgment)

#### curricula

plural (more than one curriculum, which is a program of academic courses or learning activities — the College of Education curricula)

## TRICKY WORDS

### curricular

adjective (College of Education's curricular philosophy)

### curriculum

singular (the Chemistry curriculum)

### data

plural noun, usually takes a plural verb; if used as a collective noun, when the group or quantity is regarded as a noun, it takes a singular verb (the data is sound).

### daylight-saving time

not daylight-savings time

### different from

not different than

### disinterested/uninterested

"Disinterested" means impartial. "Uninterested" means someone lacks interest.

### dissociate

not disassociate

### entitled/titled

"Entitled" means having the right to something (she is entitled to the inheritance). Use "titled" to introduce the name of a publication, speech, musical piece (the piece is titled "Love and Illusion").

### farther/further

"Farther" refers to physical distance. "Further" refers to an extension of time or degree.

### fewer/less

In general, use "fewer" for individual items that can be counted. Use "less" for bulk or quantity that is measured (not counted). "Fewer" usually takes a plural noun; "less" usually takes a singular noun.

### half-mast/half-staff

To use "half-mast," you must be referring to a flag on a ship or at a naval station. A flag anywhere else is at "half-staff."

### historic/historical

"Historic" means important. "Historical" refers to any event in the past.

## TRICKY WORDS

### hopefully

Unless you're describing the way someone spoke, appeared or acted, do not use this one. Too many people use "hopefully," an adverb that must modify a verb only, as if it were a conditional phrase.

**Right:** I hope we can go.

**Right:** It is hoped the report will address that issue.

**Right:** She eyed the interview list hopefully.

**Wrong:** Hopefully, we can go.

**Wrong:** Hopefully, the report will address that issue.

### important/importantly

"Importantly" is incorrect unless it is an adverb.

**Right:** He strutted importantly through the castle.

**Right:** More important, he said, the quality of the program must not suffer.

### imply/infer

"Imply" means to suggest or indicate indirectly. To "infer" is to conclude or decide from something known or assumed.

In general, if you imply something, you're sending out a message. If you infer something, you're interpreting a message.

### in regard to

not "in regards to." "As regards" or "regarding" may also be used.

### insure/ensure

"Insure" means to establish a contract for insurance of some type. "Ensure" means to guarantee. General rule? Use "ensure."

### irregardless

The word is "regardless." "Irregardless"? No such word.

### -ize

Do not coin verbs with this suffix, and do not use already coined words such as "finalize" (use "end" or "conclude") or "utilize" (use "use").

### lay/lie

"Lay" means to place or deposit, and requires a direct object (forms: lay, laid, laying). "Lie" means to be in a reclining position or to be situated. It does not take an object (forms: lie, lay, lain, lying).

## TRICKY WORDS

### lectern/podium

You stand on a podium and behind a lectern.

### let/leave

To “let alone” means to leave something undisturbed. To “leave alone” means to depart from or cause to be in solitude.

### like/as

Use “like” to compare nouns and pronouns. Use “as” to introduce clauses and phrases.

### literally/figuratively

“Literally” means in an exact sense. “Figuratively” means in a comparative sense.

**Right:** The furnace literally exploded.

**Right:** He was so furious he figuratively blew his stack.

### located

In most cases, you’ll find you don’t really need this word. Instead of “The Speakers Auditorium is located in the Student Center,” you can simply write “The Speakers Auditorium is in the Student Center.” Instead of “Where are you located at?” (which is the worst construction of all), write “Where are you?”

### many/much

In general, use “many” for individual items that can be counted. Use “much” for bulk or quantity that is measured.

### midnight/noon

Use instead of 12 a.m. or 12 p.m. Do not put a “12” in front of either one.

### me/myself

Avoid using “myself.” In most constructions, it’s the objective pronoun you really want.

**Right:** It’s between you and me.

**Wrong:** You can tell your supervisor or myself.

### more than/over

Use “more than” when you mean in excess of; use “over” when referring to physical placement of an object, an ending or extent of authority.

**Right:** More than 25 professors participated.

**Wrong:** The university has over 50 buildings.

## TRICKY WORDS

### Nor

Use this word anytime you use “neither.”

### oral/verbal

“Oral” refers to spoken words. “Verbal” can refer to either spoken or written words, but most often connotes the process of reducing ideas to writing.

### PantherCard and PantherCash

These important resources are both written without spaces between capitalized terms.

### partially/partly

These two are not interchangeable. “Partially” is used to mean to a certain degree when speaking of a condition or state. “Partly” implies the idea of a part, usually of a physical object, as distinct from the whole.

**Right:** I’m partially convinced.

**Wrong:** The building is partially completed.

**Right:** The building is in a state of partial completion.

**Right:** The building is partly completed.

### past experience

What other kind of experience is there? Just use “experience” alone.

### peddle/pedal

To “peddle” is to sell. To “pedal” is to use pedals, as on a bicycle.

### people/persons

Use “person” when speaking of an individual. The word “people,” rather than “persons,” is preferred for plural uses.

### pom-pom/pompon

“Pom-pom” is a rapidly firing weapon. A cheerleader’s prop is correctly called a “pompon.”

### premier/premiere

“Premier” is first in status or importance, chief, or a prime minister or chief executive. “Premiere” is a first performance.

### presently/currently

Many writers use these terms as if they were synonymous. But “presently” means in a little while, soon. “Currently” means now. In most cases you can do just fine without using “currently.” For example, “we are currently revising the plan” works better when simply stated, “we are revising the plan.”



### pretense/pretext

“Pretense” is a false show or unsupported claim to some distinction or accomplishment. “Pretext” is a false reason or motive put forth to hide the real one, an excuse or a cover-up.

### principal/principle

“Principal” as a noun is a chief person or thing; as an adjective, it means first in importance. “Principle” is a noun meaning a fundamental truth, doctrine or law; a guiding rule or code of conduct; a method of operation.

### rebut/refute

To “rebut” is to argue to the contrary. To “refute” is to win the argument.

### regardless

“Regardless” is a word. “Irregardless” is not a word.

### shall/will

“Shall” is used for the first-person future tense and expresses the speaker’s belief regarding his or her future action or state.

If “will” is used for first-person future, it expresses his or her determination or consent. At other times, “will” is used for the second- and third-person future tense.

### student body

Use “student” or “students” instead.

### that/which

See That/Which entry on page 41.

### theater/theatre

The preferred word in the United States is “theater,” unless the British spelling is part of a proper name, as in “The Fox Theatre” or “Alliance Theatre.”

### toward/towards

“Toward” is correct. “Towards” is not.

### unique

Commonly overused, this word literally means one of a kind, without equal. “Unique” should never be modified by “truly,” “rather” or “very.” Something is either unique or it’s not.

### use/utilize

Use “use.” “Utilize” is the awkward verb form of the obsolete adjective “utile.” Why bother?

### who/whom

We rarely see the word “whom” in writing. But if your sentence has an objective clause referring to a person or animal with a proper name, you’re being ungrammatical if you don’t use “whom.”

The word “who” substitutes for the subjective pronouns he, she or they; “whom” must be used in the sense of him, her or them. If you don’t want to use “whom,” restructure your sentence. Don’t just stick in “who” when it is incorrect.

### -wise

Do not use this suffix to coin words like “weatherwise.”

### Xerox/photocopy

A trademark for a brand of photocopy machine should never be used as a noun or verb.

### Commonly Misspelled Words

This is just a small sampling to get you thinking. When in doubt, use a computer spelling program or look it up (or both).

accommodate	ecstasy	liaison
acknowledgment	embarrass	memento
aesthetics (not esthetics)	exhilarate	nickel
antiquated	foreword	occurred
catalog (not catalogue)	harass	occurrence
commitment	hors d’oeuvres	perseverance
conscience	inadvertent	prerogative
consensus	indispensable	privilege
counselor	inoculate	proceed
deductible	insistent	sponsor
dissension	irresistible	tyrannous
drunkenness	judgment	vacuum
	knowledgeable	vilify

### Foreign Words

Some foreign words and abbreviations have been accepted universally into the English language: bon voyage; versus, vs.; et cetera, etc. They may be used without explanation if they are clear in the context.

Many foreign words and their abbreviations are not understood universally, although they may be used in special applications such as medical or legal terminology. If such a word or phrase is needed in a story, place it in quotation marks and provide an explanation: “ad astra per aspera,” a Latin phrase meaning “to the stars through difficulty.”

## PET PEEVES

These words and phrases have been “done to death.” Here are a few ideas for better ways to get your point across without using redundant, awkward or pretentious wording:

### Weak

#### A

absolutely essential  
accompany  
accordingly  
additional  
address  
adequate enough  
adjacent to  
afford an opportunity  
anticipate  
a large number/part  
a number of  
a variety of  
appreciable  
approximately  
as a means of  
at the present time

#### B

basic fundamentals  
be responsible for

#### C

capability/capable of  
center around  
comes into conflict  
commitment to excellence  
comply with  
comprise  
concerning  
constitutes  
construct  
contact  
currently  
cutting edge  
cutting-edge

### Better

essential  
go with  
so  
added, more, other  
discuss  
enough  
next to  
allow, let  
expect  
many/most  
some  
many, different  
many  
about  
to  
now  
  
basics  
handle  
  
ability/can  
center in, at or on  
conflicts  
quality  
follow  
form, include, make up  
about, on  
is, forms, makes up  
build  
call, write, reach  
omit it. It’s already implied.  
forefront, frontier  
leading, pioneering, progressive

## PET PEEVES

### Weak

#### D

designate  
determine  
do not hesitate to call  
due to the fact that

#### E

equitable  
evidenced  
exhibit  
exhibits a tendency to

#### F

facilitate  
factor  
feedback, input  
foreign imports  
for the purpose of  
furnish  
future prospects

#### G

generate  
gives consideration to

#### H

head up  
high tech  
  
holds a belief

#### I

if at all possible  
impacted  
implement  
in accordance with  
in addition  
in an effort to  
in conjunction with  
in order to  
in the near future  
initiate

### Better

appoint, choose, name  
decide, figure, find  
call  
due to, since

fair  
showed, shown  
show  
tends to

ease, help  
reason, cause  
opinion, reaction  
imports  
to  
give, send  
prospects

do, make, create  
considers

head  
pioneering technology (or a more specific substitute)  
believes

if possible  
affected, changed, hit  
carry out, do, follow  
by, following, under  
also, besides, too  
to  
with  
to  
soon  
start, begin

## PET PEEVES

### Weak

innovative  
input

### J

joint cooperation  
just exactly

### K

### L

legislation

### M

makes an attempt  
maximize  
minimize  
modify

### N

necessary (pre)requisites  
new innovations  
numerous

### O

objective  
optimum  
output

### P

past experience  
personnel  
pre-planning  
prioritize  
prior to  
provides guidance for  
possibly might  
postpone until later  
purpose is to

### Q

qualified expert

### Better

creative, pioneering, inventive  
comments, advice, response

cooperation  
exactly

law

attempts, tries  
increase, enlarge, expand, broaden  
decrease, lessen, reduce  
change

(pre)requisites  
innovations  
many, most

aim, goal  
best, greatest, most  
comment, idea

experience  
people, staff  
planning  
put in order  
before  
guides  
might  
postpone  
(don't need it)

expert

## PET PEEVES

### Weak

### R

(in the) real world  
real-world problem

refer back  
retain

### S

send a communication to  
similar to  
solicit  
state-of-the-art

### T

try and fix

### U

unique

utilize, utilization

### V

viable

### W

warrant  
whereas  
wide range  
wide variety  
without further delay  
with the exception of

### X

### Y

### Z

### Better

in the world, in society, in business  
practical issue, business (or social)  
issue or problem

refer  
keep

notify  
like  
ask for  
latest

try to fix

one-of-a-kind (literal) exciting, new,  
unusual (as often used)  
use

practical, workable

call for, permit  
since  
many, range  
many, variety  
now, immediately  
except for

# PROOFREADERS' MARKS

Instruction	Mark in Margin	Mark on Proof	Corrected Type
<b>General</b>			
delete		delete the <del>the</del> word	delete the word
close up; delete space		close the <del>gap</del>	close the gap
insert indicated material	<i>missing</i>	the <del>word</del>	the missing word
let it stand	<i>stet</i>	no <del>problem</del> here	no problem here
spell out	<i>sp</i>	San Diego, CA	San Diego, California
new paragraph		...start of the trip. Finally, we...	...start of the trip. Finally, we...
transpose	<i>tr</i>	painted the <del>red town</del>	painted the town red
move left	[	[ move left	move left
move right	]	] move right	move right
move down		<del>move</del> down	move down
move up		<del>move</del> up	move up
align		line up here	line up here
insert space	#	too <del>close</del>	too close
<b>Punctuation</b>			
period	⊙	The end <del>.</del>	The end.
comma	⊙	planes <del>,</del> trains and automobiles	planes, trains and automobile
hyphen	-	full <del>color</del> brochure	full-color brochure
en dash	<i>1/n</i>	2000 <del>2004</del>	2000-2004
em dash	<i>1/m</i>	Now <del>at</del> last!	Now — at last!
colon	⊙	the following list <del>.</del>	the following list:
semicolon	;	Tom walked <del>John</del> ran.	Tom walked; John ran.
apostrophe	'	Joe <del>s</del> house	Joe's house
double quotations marks	"	he said <del>no</del>	he said "no"
single quotation marks	'	she said "Joe said <del>no</del> "	she said "Joe said 'no'"
parentheses	(/)	attach the zipper <del>figure 12</del>	attach the zipper (figure 12)
brackets	{/}	"They <del>the fans</del> overreacted."	"They [the fans] overreacted."
asterisk	*	word <del></del>	word*
backslash	/	he <del>/she</del>	he/she
three ellipses	·   ·   ·	more <del>words</del>	more...words
four ellipses	·   ·   ·	more words <del>.</del>	more words....
<b>Style</b>			
uppercase	<i>uc</i>	<del>capital</del> letters	Capital Letters
lowercase	<i>lc</i>	<del>lowercase</del>	lowercase
small capitals	<i>sc</i>	<del>Small Capitals</del>	SMALL CAPITALS
italic	<i>ital</i>	<del>Fashion</del> magazine	<i>Fashion</i> magazine
roman	<i>rom</i>	<del>fancy</del> words	fancy words
boldface	<i>bold</i>	<del>bold</del> type	<b>bold</b> type
wrong font	<i>wf</i>	th <del>e</del> <del>rain</del> fell	the rain fell



**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Public Relations and  
Marketing Communications

<http://commkit.gsu.edu/guidelines/ap-style-guide/>