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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 our campuses produce their own digital content, memos, letters, brochures, posters, invitations, fliers, booklets, catalogs, magazines and newsletters. Writers and editors have their own priorities and objectives.

However, no matter where they originate, Georgia State publications and communications — print and digital — can only be effective if they use clear, consistent language that’s used throughout the university.

Clarity and consistency are essential for one basic reason: the reader. Many of our audiences overlap. The same person may see an Andrew Young School of Policy Studies brochure, an invitation from Development & Alumni Affairs, a copy of Georgia State University Magazine, a flier about scholarship opportunities from the Honors College, a letter from the dean of students and an advertisement for an event — all in one week. Imagine the confusion that would ensue if each part of the university used the English language differently. Our readers would wonder if we’re all talking about the same place.

It’s for this reason that we produce this style guide, which collects and standardizes preferred language for nonacademic writing produced at Georgia State. It also answers the most common questions that arise when we’re writing about the university.

So, what is “style”? In written communication, style is a set of conventions that shape, clarify and standardize language. Style determines the preferred terms and names for academic degrees, campuses, facilities, titles, offices, administrative units and so on. It tells you what to capitalize and what to hyphenate, and it helps you avoid mistakes and inconsistencies that can reflect poorly on you, your office and the university.

We appreciate your cooperation in following these guidelines. University-wide consistency builds the credibility of our communications, demonstrates our commitment to high-quality standards and greatly enhances our audiences’ understanding of Georgia State.
GUIDELINES, NOT RULES

The English language gives us many choices and decisions to make when we write, which challenges many prescriptive approaches to standardization.

This guide will not answer all of your questions about language. However, it will give you a foundation upon which to base your own writing decisions and help you improve the clarity and consistency of your communications.

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 the same time, we often deviate from Associated Press (AP) style because we are not journalists, and our writing frequently serves purposes AP standards do not accommodate.

If you can’t find what you’re looking for in here, consult the latest edition of the Associated Press Stylebook or Webster’s New World College Dictionary.

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 university audience or for the public.

Just as the English language has evolved over the years, this style guide will adapt to new use and trends, sometimes based on input from people like you. Share your questions, suggestions and observations with us by emailing Benjamin Hodges at bhodges1@gsu.edu.
UNIVERSITY IDENTITY

Name
Our national and international identity hinges on the words “Georgia State University.” Do not use the initialism “GSU.” Beyond our community of insiders, this acronym is not well recognized and may be confused with other institutions, such as Georgia Southern University and Grambling State University.

We want to proclaim the university’s name, not obscure it. While some of your readers may use the term “GSU” themselves, you should never risk minimizing the recognition or impact of the name Georgia State University. “GSU” should only be used on social media and within Athletics.

Use the full name “Georgia State University” the first time you refer to the university. Upon second reference and thereafter, use “Georgia State” or “the university.” Lowercase “university” when using it as a second reference.

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

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.

University Logo parts

The graphic mark is an abstract representation of the letters “G” and “S.” Its purpose is not to represent the school’s initials literally, but to function as a strong visual symbol that is easily recognized, remembered and associated with Georgia State University.

The mark supports further symbolism. For example, the flame-like aspect can represent both the traditional flame of knowledge as well as the mythical phoenix, the symbol of Atlanta’s post–Civil War rebirth.
UNIVERSITY IDENTITY

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 our digital asset library at commkit.gsu.edu. For more information, contact Ellen Powell, senior director of strategic communications, at 404-413-1352 or ellenpowell@gsu.edu.

The State Way
When you refer to the university’s marketing and identity campaign in a sentence or hashtag, capitalize every word.

Right:  We’re graduating students The State Way.
Right:  We’re graduating students #TheStateWay.

Academic Degrees and Programs
Spell out and use lowercase: associate degree, bachelor’s degree, master’s degree, doctor’s degree or doctorate. (Note: You can receive a doctorate or a doctor’s degree but not a doctoral degree.)

In general, avoid using degree abbreviations in text unless you are describing the credentials of specific alumni. To abbreviate, capitalize each letter and follow it with a period: B.A., B.F.A., B.I.S., J.D., M.P.H., M.S., M.S.W., M.S.I.A. and so on. There are exceptions, such as LL.M., MBA, M.Ed. and Ph.D.

Right:  Two years after earning an associate of arts degree through Perimeter College, he graduated from the Atlanta Campus with a bachelor’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.
Wrong:  He earned a bachelor of music degree.
Wrong:  He earned a bachelor’s of anthropology.

Alumni
To indicate degrees earned by alumni, follow a person’s name with parentheses containing the degree abbreviation and the last two digits of the year of graduation. Precede the last two digits of the year with an apostrophe, which — to be an apostrophe — must point down and to the left. Do not place a comma between the year and the degree.

Right:  Former State Senator David Adelman (M.P.A. ’95) served as the United States Ambassador to Singapore from 2010 to 2013.
Right:  Brian Egan (B.F.A. ’12) oversees programming at the Mammal Gallery, an arts and performance facility.
Wrong: Ignatius Blubberstock (Ph.D. ‘99) has published his fourth book.

If a person has received more than one degree from Georgia State, name each in chronological order, and separate them with commas.

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

Right: Joyce Mitchell (B.A. ’08, M.A. ’10)

Programs and Pathways
While Georgia State offers more than 250 bachelor’s, master’s and doctor’s degree “programs” at the Atlanta Campus, it offers more than 30 “pathways” or “academic pathways” through Perimeter College. Do not use the word “program” to refer to associate degree coursework at Perimeter College.

Doctors
Use “Dr.” in first reference as a formal title before the name of a person who holds a doctor of medicine degree (M.D.), doctor of osteopathy degree (D.O.) or any other terminal medical practice degree. In some circumstances, you may also use “Dr.” in first reference to describe academic scholars with other types of doctorates. However, this practice is not preferred and should usually be avoided.

The preferred way to describe a person with a doctor’s degree (whether Ph.D., Th.D, D.P.T. or anything else) is to say he or she holds a “doctorate” or “doctor’s degree” in the name of his or her field of specialty.

Do not precede a name with a title of an academic degree (“Dr.”) and follow it with the abbreviation for that degree (“Ph.D.”). Do not use “Dr.” before the names of individuals who hold honorary degrees only. References to honorary degrees must specify the degree was honorary.

Right: Dr. William Keeling directs the cardiothoracic surgery program at Grady Memorial Hospital.

Right: Carl V. Patton, Ph.D., was president of Georgia State University between 1992 and 2008.

Right: Tim Renick earned a doctorate in religion from Princeton University.

OK: Dr. Wayne Erickson, the beloved Spenser scholar in the English Department, retired in 2010.

Wrong: Dr. Carl V. Patton, Ph.D., was president of Georgia State University between 1992 and 2008.
UNIVERSITY IDENTITY

Addresses and Locations
Spell out and capitalize formal street names, but use lowercase when you’re referring to more than one in a phrase or are using general, unspecified street words. Spell out and capitalize numbered streets First through Ninth.

Right: Peachtree Center Avenue used to be called Ivy Street.
Right: Enter Hurt Park at the corner of Courtland and Gilmer streets.
Right: Cobblestone streets surround the hotel.
Wrong: There is a lot of student housing at the corner of Piedmont and John Wesley Dobbs Avenues.

Use the abbreviations “Ave.,” “Blvd.” and “St.” every time you can include a numbered address, but never use them without a number.

Right: Send mail to 100 Auburn Ave. NE.
Right: The president lives on Pennsylvania Avenue.
Wrong: Gordon St. and Butler St. were renamed Ralph David Abernathy Blvd. and Jesse Hill Jr. Dr.

Atlanta Addresses and Directional Suffixes
While many cities use directional prefixes, Atlanta uses directional suffixes, and no city of Atlanta postal address is complete without one. For example, there is no such thing as “30 Courtland St.” or “75 Piedmont Ave.” or “55 Boulevard.”

There are two potential locations for each of these incomplete addresses: 30 Courtland St. NE and 30 Courtland St. SE, 75 Piedmont Ave. NE and 75 Piedmont Ave. SE, and 55 Boulevard NE and 55 Boulevard SE. Each of these complete addresses is blocks away from its counterpart in the adjacent quadrant. In another example, Grant Street SE in Grant Park has no relation to Grant Street SW in Sylvan Hills. They are different streets that never connect, and 531 Grant St. SE is more than four miles from 531 Grant St. SW. An Atlanta address missing its quadrant can also end of up referring to another city. For instance, without a directional suffix, “363 North Ave.” is in Hapeville, not Atlanta.

Without the correct directional suffix, readers can and will end up lost trying to find locations in the wrong quadrant of the city, and the Post Office will either return mail to the sender or deliver mail to unintended recipients. Publishing addresses without directional suffixes is tantamount to telling readers to visit and send materials to places that do not exist.

Note: If you do not have a numbered address and are referring to a street in general terms, you do not need to specify a quadrant. Do not punctuate abbreviations of directional suffixes with periods.
UNIVERSITY IDENTITY

Right: Instead of sharing the same 100 block, the Student Recreation Center at 101 Piedmont Ave. SE is five blocks away from the University Commons at 141 Piedmont Ave. NE.

Right: The Welcome Center operates out of the first floor of Centennial Hall at 100 Auburn Ave. NE.

Right: The university is planning to build a large, multiuse facility at the corner of Fulton Street and Capitol Avenue.

Wrong: Georgia State’s main address is 33 Gilmer St.

Wrong: Visit 75 Piedmont Ave. for both University Housing and the Counseling Center.

Wrong: 80 Forsyth St.

Wrong: 34 Peachtree Street

Campuses
Georgia State University has six campuses: Atlanta Campus, Alpharetta Campus, Clarkston Campus, Decatur Campus, Dunwoody Campus and Newton Campus.

Because it only occupies one floor in a high-rise, Buckhead Center is not a campus and should never be counted among them. However, it may be listed among the university’s locations.

In general, you should refer to every campus as belonging to the university (“Georgia State’s Decatur Campus”). However, it is permissible — especially in internal communications — to refer to the Alpharetta, Clarkston, Decatur, Dunwoody and Newton campuses as “Perimeter College campuses.”

Campus Buildings and Facilities
Proper names of buildings, such as “Piedmont Central” and “Student Center East,” should be capitalized. Terms such as “north wing” and “new residence hall” should not be capitalized unless they are used in the title of the building.

Some parts of the Atlanta Campus have confusing names. Make sure you refer to buildings and facilities correctly and consistently. We present here a few commonly misused building and facility names. However, if you’re ever unsure, consult the list of buildings maintained by Facilities Management Services at facilities.gsu.edu/building-list for the latest, official information.

Ernest G. Welch School of Art & Design Gallery
Though this facility comprises two separate galleries, its name is the “Ernest G. Welch School of Art & Design Gallery.” On second reference, it may be called the “Welch School Gallery.” Don’t use “Galleries,” and don’t call it the “Welch Gallery” or the “Georgia State University School of Art & Design Gallery.”
UNIVERSITY IDENTITY

One Park Place
“One Park Place” is the name of the building. It isn’t the building’s mailing address. “1 Park Place SE” is the building’s mailing address. It isn’t the building’s name. “1 Park Place” is neither the name of the building nor its mailing address.

Right: Public Relations & Marketing Communications moved from One Park Place to Centennial Hall.
Right: Visit the School of Public Health at 1 Park Place SE.
Wrong: One Park Place
Atlanta, GA 30303

Speaker’s Auditorium
The auditorium in Student Center East has only one name.

Right: The talk will be held in the Speaker’s Auditorium.
Wrong: The Speakers Auditorium is host to many of the university’s best attractions.
Wrong: The Speakers’ Auditorium seats 425 people.

University Bookstore Building
The University Bookstore has only one name and is found inside the University Bookstore Building (not Student Center West, which is immediately adjacent to it).

Right: University Bookstore
Wrong: GSU Campus Store

Floors
When referencing the floor of a building in body copy, follow standard AP rules for spelling out ordinal numbers under 10. (See “Numbers” on pp. 26–27 for more information.) In a mailing address, always use the numeral. Do not capitalize the word “floor” in either case.

Right: The board met on the ninth floor of Langdale Hall.
Right: The English Department moved to the 23rd floor of 25 Park Place.
Right: 100 Auburn Ave. NE
4th floor
Wrong: 34 Broad St. NW
Seventh floor

Rooms
A room number is not a mailing address and should not be written like one. For example, “200 Sparks Hall” does not correspond to “200 Woodward
Ave. SE,” and formatting them both the same way may lead to confusion, especially with readers unfamiliar with our campuses.

Instead, in body copy, place the room or suite location in lowercase after the name of the building, and separate them with a comma. In mailing addresses and headings, either capitalize the room or suite location and place it on the next line or, to keep everything on one line, use a comma after the building name followed by the capitalized room name and number.

Right: For assistance, visit the Enrollment Services Center in Sparks Hall, room 227.
Right: Contact the Cooperative Education & Internship Office in Dahlberg Hall, suite 134.
Right: Aderhold Learning Center, Room 023
Right: Centennial Hall, Suite 200
Right: New Student Orientation
Student Center East
55 Gilmer St. SE
Suite 304
Atlanta, GA 30303
Wrong: 260 Student Center West, Sparks Hall 200
Wrong: Consult an adviser at the Office of Academic Assistance in Langdale Hall Suite 418.

Names and Classifications
Georgia State’s centers, colleges, departments, divisions, institutes, offices, schools and units do not adhere to a strict naming system. Nevertheless, this rough guide can help you understand the different words we use to talk about the university’s many components.

“Colleges” and “schools” can be synonymous: The J. Mack Robinson College of Business and the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies are both technically colleges of equal authority and rank.

This is no strict rule, however, because schools can also be housed within colleges or even other schools. The School of Music and the Ernest G. Welch School of Art & Design, for example, are part of the College of the Arts, the School of Nursing is part of the Byrdine F. Lewis College of Nursing & Health Professions and the School of Social Work operates within the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies.

When used in an academic context, “institutes” and “centers” often have similar purposes and engage in similar activities, but only institutes, such as the
Institute for Biomedical Sciences, can offer degree programs. Centers, such as the Center for State & Local Finance, cannot. Note that institutes do not have to offer degree programs to be institutes. They have to be able to offer them.

“Division” can be particularly tricky. In general, “division” designates an administrative area or group of administrative departments (sometimes called “offices”) overseen by a vice president. Jerry Rackliffe is the senior vice president of the division of Finance & Administration, which contains the department of Budget & Planning. Likewise, as vice president for student engagement and programs, Allison Calhoun-Brown oversees the division of Student Affairs, which houses Recreational Services.

At the same time, “division” can also refer to a group of academic departments within a college. The College of Arts & Sciences divides its 23 departments and degree-granting institutes into three divisions: Humanities, Natural and Computational Sciences, and Social and Behavioral Sciences. The division of Facilities Management Services, overseen by a vice president, is itself part of the division of Finance & Administration, overseen by a senior vice president. These examples are exceptions to the rule, however.

“Unit” is usually reserved for budgetary purposes but can also be synonymous with “department,” whether academic (Department of English) or administrative (Campus Services).

For capitalization rules, see “Departments, Divisions and Offices” on pp. 20–21.

**Colleges and Schools**

Georgia State is composed of 11 colleges and schools: the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, Byrdine F. Lewis College of Nursing & Health Professions, College of the Arts, College of Arts & Sciences, College of Education & Human Development, College of Law, Honors College, Institute for Biomedical Sciences, J. Mack Robinson College of Business, Perimeter College and School of Public Health.

**Note:** While not technically a college or school, the Institute for Biomedical Sciences, the university’s only degree-granting institute, is counted as one and should always be listed among the rest.

You may describe a college’s relationship to the university in three ways, depending on context and personal preference: “[the] [college] at Georgia State University” (with or without the definite article as appropriate), “Georgia State University’s [college]” or “the Georgia State University [college].” Never use slashes, colons, commas or dashes.
Note: While all three methods are appropriate for every college, the preferred name for Perimeter College is “Georgia State University’s Perimeter College” for first reference and “Perimeter College” thereafter.

Right: The Andrew Young School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University
Right: Georgia State University’s College of Arts & Sciences
Right: The Georgia State University School of Public Health

Three colleges in particular may go by abbreviated names, especially in internal communications: “the Andrew Young School,” “the Lewis College” and “Robinson.” You may use these abbreviations upon second reference.

At the same time, four colleges in particular may use acronyms and initialisms, especially in internal communications: “AYS” or “AYSPS” for the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, “CAS” for the College of Arts & Sciences, “CEHD” for the College of Education & Human Development and “RCB” for the J. Mack Robinson College of Business. The context will determine if these are appropriate. If they will help you avoid clumsy repetition and save space, use them as long as you spell out the full name of the college in first reference and immediately follow the full name by the acronym in parentheses. See “Acronyms and Initialisms” on pp. 16–17 for more information.

Departments, Divisions and Offices
Capitalize the names of departments. If you’re talking about an administrative department, either omit or lowercase the word “department.” If you’re talking about an academic department, retain and capitalize the word “department.” Capitalize the names of divisions and offices as well while omitting the words “division” and “office” whenever possible. If you need these words, place them either before or after the proper name in lowercase. Always use lowercase for the words “department,” “division” and “office” when they stand alone.

Right: Contact the Financial Aid office for more information.
Right: Contact Financial Aid for more information.
Right: The Department of Astronomy hosts weekly viewing nights on university telescopes.
Right: Budget & Planning is on the fourth floor of Sparks Hall.
Right: She’s been with the department for three years.
Right: Public Relations & Marketing Communications oversees the university’s website.
Right: The division of Public Relations & Marketing Communications relocated to Centennial Hall.
Wrong: Contact the Office of Financial Aid for more information.
Wrong: The Division will release its report.
UNIVERSITY IDENTITY

Capitalize the field only when it refers to a specific department, division or office. Otherwise, use lowercase.

Right: She’s trying to get more experience working in student affairs.
Right: Student Affairs oversees Recreational Services. (The division of Student Affairs oversees the department of Recreational Services.)
Right: The Department of English redesigned its website.
Right: After majoring in physics, she started working for the Physics & Astronomy Department.

Centers and Institutes
Capitalize the formal names of centers, such as the Fiscal Research Center or the University Advisement Center, and institutes, such as the Confucius Institute, but lowercase “center” and “institute” when used alone. Upon second reference, it is not necessary to use the complete name.

Right: The Institute of International Business hosts seminars.
Right: The institute will welcome dozens of affiliates.
Right: The Student Recreation Center opened in 1996.
Right: The Andrew Young School houses 12 research centers.

University Style Basics
Acronyms and Initialisms
An acronym is a series of letters taken from a set of words that is pronounced as a word (for example, “NATO” for the North American Trade Organization). An initialism is a series of letters taken from a set of words where each letter is pronounced individually (for example, “DEA” for the Drug Enforcement Agency).

Using acronyms and initialisms can quicken your pacing and help you avoid repetition of long phrases. In nearly every case, however, you should spell out the full name, title or phrase the first time you refer to it in text, followed immediately by the acronym or initialism in parentheses.

You should then use the acronym or initialism for each subsequent use. If your text contains only one reference, spell out the full name, and do not note the acronym or initialism in parentheses. For the sake of brevity, headlines may use common but unidentified acronyms and initialisms, but make sure to spell out the full term upon first reference in text.

These conventions aren’t always appropriate, however. If the next appearance of an uncommon acronym or initialism comes much later in the piece — such that no reader could be expected to remember it — it’s often best to spell it
out again. At the same time, a few acronyms and initialisms are more commonly understood than the full titles they represent (such as HIV and NCAA), and spelling out their meanings can clog up the flow of a pleasant sentence.

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

**OK:** Although she won a prized internship at NASA, she couldn’t afford the move to Houston.

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

**Contractions**

In most nonacademic writing, contractions convey a more conversational tone, making your text easier to read. Unless a more formal construction helps emphasize the meaning of a sentence or phrase, use contractions consistently.

You’ll notice we’ve used contractions frequently in this publication, except for points of emphasis, as in “do not” instead of “don’t.”

**States**

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.

When referencing a city and a state together, do not use postal abbreviations in your text. Use the following AP abbreviations. Note that some states must always be spelled out.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ala.</td>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>Mass.</td>
<td>N.M.</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ariz.</td>
<td>Ill.</td>
<td>Minn.</td>
<td>N.C.</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ark.</td>
<td>Ind.</td>
<td>Miss.</td>
<td>N.D.</td>
<td>Utah</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calif.</td>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>Mo.</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>Vt.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fla.</td>
<td>Maine</td>
<td>N.H.</td>
<td>R.I.</td>
<td>Wis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**UNIVERSITY IDENTITY**

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

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

Use “Washington, D.C.” Don’t abbreviate to “D.C.” or, worse, “DC.”

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

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

You must specify a city’s state on first reference, but you may drop it in subsequent references.

Always spell out a state name if it’s part of a title or name, such as “The Georgia Department of Education.”

For more information, see “City” on p. 19, “County” on p. 20, “State” on p. 23 and “City, State” on p. 31.

**U.S./United States**

“United States” is best, but frequent repetition or spatial constraints can necessitate “U.S.” Avoid “USA” and “America,” and stay consistent.
CAPITALIZATION

Academic Degrees
Use lowercase: associate degree, associate of arts degree, bachelor’s degree, bachelor of interdisciplinary studies degree, master’s degree, master of science degree in chemistry, doctor’s degree, doctorate. For more information, see “Academic Degrees and Programs” on pp. 8–9.

a.m. / p.m.
Use lowercase and periods for “a.m.” and “p.m.”

Athletics
Use lowercase for generic references to sports and athletics, and capitalize to refer to Georgia State’s department of Intercollegiate Athletics. You may also refer to the department as “Georgia State Athletics.”

Right: The president wanted the university to excel in athletics.
Right: Many Athletics offices have moved to Georgia State Stadium.

Board of Regents
For first reference, use “Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia.” For second reference, either shorten to “Board of Regents” or use “board” or “regents” in lowercase. 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 of Regents will meet tomorrow.
Right: The board met at 9 a.m.
Right: She is a regent.
Right: The wife of former Atlanta Mayor, Regent Sarah-Elizabeth Reed also sits on the board of the Children’s Museum of Atlanta.
Wrong: The board of regents will meet tomorrow.

City
Capitalize the word “city” when it occurs in the name of a municipality, such as “New York City” or “Dodge City.” If you’re placing “the city of” before the name of a city, such as “the city of Oakland,” lowercase “city” to refer to the town itself, but capitalize it to refer to the city government.

Right: Panic spread throughout the city of Pittsburgh.
Right: She used to work for the City of Nashville.
Right: Following the federal subpoena, the City of Atlanta released 1.5 million pages of records.
CAPITALIZATION

Classes and Courses
Use lowercase when you refer to classes unless you use the specific, complete course title or unless the course title contains a numeral or proper noun.

Right: I had a class in engineering management.
Right: I’m taking English 1101.
Right: I’m taking biology, Advanced Shakespeare and calculus.

Commencement
Lowercase “commencement” when used generically in text. Capitalize it to refer to a specific event, such as the “104th Commencement” or “2020 Spring Commencement.” Avoid “commencement ceremony” or “commencement ceremonies,” which are redundant. Instead, use “commencement” or “commencements.”

Right: The new convocation center will host commencement, public events and Panthers’ basketball.
Right: The multiuse facility will provide much-needed indoor space for the university’s commencements.
Right: Georgia State’s 105th Commencement will be held at the Georgia World Congress Center.

Committees
Capitalize the formal names of groups and committees, such as Administrative Council and Planning & Development Committee. Lowercase “committee” and “council” when they stand alone.

County
Because the word “county” is part of every county name, it must be capitalized in those names. Lowercase “county” when you’re using it outside of a proper name.

Right: The researchers announced a partnership with DeKalb County.
Right: We need approval from the county before we can proceed.

Dean’s List and President’s List
Always use lowercase: dean’s list, president’s list.

Departments, Divisions and Offices
Capitalize the names of departments. If you’re talking about an administrative department, either omit or lowercase the word “department.” If you’re talking about an academic department, retain and capitalize the word “department.” Capitalize the names of divisions and offices as well while omitting the words
“division” and “office” whenever possible. If you need these words, place them either before or after the proper name in lowercase. Always use lowercase for the words “department,” “division” and “office” when they stand alone. For more information, see “Departments, Divisions and Offices” on pp. 16–17.

Districts and Neighborhoods
Use lowercase for general sections of a city, but capitalize proper names of neighborhoods. Lowercase “downtown” to indicate a large, nonspecific area near a city center, but capitalize it to refer to a specific neighborhood of that name. In Atlanta, for instance, “Downtown” is the proper name of the neighborhood roughly bordered by North Avenue, Piedmont Avenue, Memorial Drive, Ted Turner Drive, Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and Northside Drive.

Right: Traffic is a problem throughout downtown.
Right: Residents of Downtown are fighting the casino development.
Right: Hell’s Kitchen has undergone extensive gentrification since the early 1990s.
Right: The university is expanding into Old Fourth Ward and Summerhill.

Fax
Use lowercase when the word “fax” appears in a sentence. If you’re providing a fax number on your business card or in a listing, it’s OK to use an initial capital.

Right: Email or fax me the information.
Right: College of Arts & Sciences
Phone: 404-413-5114
Fax: 404-413-5117

Federal Government
Use lowercase when the word “federal” is an adjective and does not appear in the proper name of a government agency: federal court, the federal government, the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

Headlines
Use title case in all headlines, which means capitalize the first, last and all major words, excepting articles, and prepositions and conjunctions of three letters or fewer.

Homecoming
Use lowercase for “homecoming” when used generically in text. You may capitalize it when it’s used in a title to refer to a specific event.
CAPITALIZATION

**Right:** Dating back to 1916, homecoming is the university’s longest-running on-campus tradition.

**Right:** The alumni enjoyed attending Homecoming 2019.

**Honors**
Lowercase and italicize *cum laude*, *magna cum laude* and *summa cum laude*.

**Hyphenated Words in Titles**
Capitalize both parts of a hyphenated word.

**Right:** “Twentieth-Century Poets in South America”
**Right:** “City-States in 19th-Century Europe”
**Right:** “Great Examples of Self-Control”
**Right:** “The Star-Spangled Banner”

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

**Regions**
The names of regions are capitalized when they stand alone and are widely understood to designate a specific geographic area.

**Right:** southeast Atlanta, western Georgia, east coast of Florida, midwestern United States, southern Tennessee
**Right:** West Coast, Midwest, South, South Pacific
**Right:** West Texas, Piedmont, Middle Georgia

**Seasons**
Use lowercase when these words stand alone. Capitalize them only when they’re used in a title or as part of a formal name.

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

**Semesters**
With the exception of “Maymester,” do not capitalize the names of semesters in text.

**Right:** Pantherpalooza takes place during the spring semester.
**Right:** 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 lowercase “number.” Capitalize references to the Social Security Administration.

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

**State**
If you’re placing “the state of” before the name of a state, such as “the state of Georgia,” lowercase “state” to refer to the territory, but capitalize it to refer to the state government. (See “States” on pp. 17–18 for more information.)

**Right:** Invasive weeds have spread throughout the state of Montana.
**Right:** Several citizens have sued the State of Georgia over the new law.

**Student Classifications**
Capitalize class designations, but do not capitalize “freshman,” “sophomore,” “junior,” “senior,” “postdoctoral fellow” or “graduate student.”

**Right:** She graduated as a member of the Class of 2019.
**Right:** He’s a senior engineering major.

**Titles**
A person’s title is capitalized only when used before his or her 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. The president will speak at the dinner.
**Right:** Now that Vice President for Student Affairs Douglass Covey is returning to the faculty, Allison Calhoun-Brown has been appointed to a new position, vice president for student engagement and programs, and will assume his responsibilities.
**Right:** Our speaker will be primatologist Jane Goodall.

Titles following a person’s name should appear in lowercase. Use lowercase when a title is used alone.

**Right:** The president of Georgia State University will address the group.
**Right:** Timothy Renick, vice provost and vice president of enrollment management and student success, will host the reception.
CAPITALIZATION

Do not capitalize “professor,” “associate professor” or “assistant professor,” whether used alone or before a person’s name, unless they are the first words in a sentence. In titles, the term “professor” is used very specifically. The word should only refer to people who have official status as full professors. Otherwise, use the correct title of “assistant professor,” “associate professor,” “senior instructor” and so on.

Right: Contact Jennifer McCoy, professor of political science.
Right: Contact associate professor Jonathan Walker in the Department of English.

Capitalize the official names of honorary chairs and university professorships. Use “the” to introduce named professorships.

Right: Renowned public finance and education policy expert Ross Rubenstein joined the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies in 2015 to assume the Dan E. Sweat Distinguished Chair in Educational and Community Policy.
Right: Regents’ Professor Teryl Frey has received a Fulbright Scholarship.
Right: Distinguished University Professor Stephen Dobranski is known for his hatred of mayonnaise.

Governors, Representatives and Reverends
When used before an individual’s name, place the title abbreviation “Gov.,” “Rep.” or “the Rev.” before the person's name.

Right: The governor, representative and reverend will speak.
Wrong: Governor Kemp, Representative Lewis and Rev. Miller will address the crowd.

University System of Georgia
Capitalize “University System of Georgia.”

Right: The University System of Georgia comprises 29 colleges and universities.
DATES, NUMBERS AND TIME

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

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

Spell out the name of the month when using it alone or with a year. When using a month and a year together, do not separate them with commas. When a phrase contains a month, date and year, follow the date and the year with commas. (See “Ranges” on pp. 27–28 for day and date ranges.)

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

Do not use the word “on” before a month, date or day of the week when its absence would not lead to confusion. Using “in” before a month is optional.

Right: The meeting will be held Monday.
Right: He will be inaugurated Feb. 22.
Right: The program ends in December.
Right: The program ends December 2017.

Do not use suffixes with dates.

Right: Oct. 14
Wrong: Oct. 14th

Use an “s” without an apostrophe after a year to indicate a decade. Neither spell out decades, nor abbreviate them to their last two digits. You may use an apostrophe (always pointing down and to the left) only before class years and alumni degrees to indicate the first two numbers of the year are omitted. (See “Alumni” on pp. 8–9 for more information.)

Right: The university was formed in the 1910s.
Right: Duane belonged to the Class of 1924.
Right: Shannon graduated with the Class of ’03.
Wrong: The ’60s were famous for hippies and the peace movement.
Wrong: the fourties, the Sixties

An apostrophe after the year is needed to indicate possession.

Right: The presidential election was 1980’s biggest news story.
DATES, NUMBERS AND TIME

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

Right: one-half, two-thirds
Right: 3.8 miles
Right: one and a half gallons

Money
Use the appropriate currency symbol and numerals. Do not use a decimal and two zeros for whole dollar amounts.

Right: $150
Right: $150.25
Wrong: $150.00

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

Right: $4 million
Wrong: $4,000,000

Numbers
Spell out numbers zero through nine. Use numerals for all numbers 10 and above. Superscripts for ordinal suffixes are optional. Use whatever looks best, and stay consistent. Exceptions are noted below.

Right: nine poodles, four rooms, 16 buildings
Right: 15th highest, 21st Street, Sixth Avenue
Right: He teaches ninth grade and acts like a ninth-grader.

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

Right: She has a 2-year-old daughter and a son, 8.
Right: 8 milligrams, 4 degrees below zero
Right: 3-point shot, the 6-foot-4-inch guard
Right: According to the chart on page 4, nearly half of the elementary-age children in Georgia receive a $5 weekly allowance.

For numbers of more than three digits, use a comma after every third digit from right to left.
DATES, NUMBERS AND TIME

Right: $1,000
Right: Piedmont Central will provide housing for 1,100 students.
Wrong: $1000

For numbers beyond thousands that do not involve currency, spell out numbers under 10, and use the appropriate word to describe the quantity.

Right: Nearly three million people live in Chicago.
Right: Apple sold more than 590 million iPhones between 2007 and 2014.
Wrong: According to the United States Department of Agriculture, an estimated 133,000,000,000 pounds of food went uneaten in 2010.

Avoid starting sentences with numbers. If you have no choice, 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 0–9) and spell out the words “percent” and “percentage point” in text. “Percent” takes a singular verb when standing alone. When it’s followed by the preposition “of,” use a verb that agrees with the object of the preposition: Use a singular verb if the object is singular, and use a plural verb if the object is plural.

Right: Only 8 percent of the class voted.
Right: We raised graduation rates by 22 percentage points over 10 years.
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 (%) only in stylized callouts in design, charts or figures, and academic or technical writing.

“Percent” and “percentage point” are not synonymous. For example, if a 40 percent graduation rate increases by 30 percent, it goes up to 52 percent. If it increases by 30 percentage points, it goes up to 70 percent.

Ranges
In text, describe a range using prepositional phrases, such as “between X and Y” or “from X to Y.” You may also join the beginning and end of a numerical range or span of years with a hyphen or en dash, but make sure you don’t include the prepositions.
DATES, NUMBERS AND TIME

When indicating a span of years with a hyphen or en dash, either drop the first two digits of the second year or keep all four. Whatever you do, stay consistent. If the years span a century change, always use all four numbers of the second year.

**Right:** Between 2000 and 2010, revenue dropped 15 to 20 percent.
**Right:** From April to August, the exhibit drew 400–500 visitors per week.
**Right:** We’re open Monday through Friday.
**Wrong:** Jerry Trickie was the associate athletics director for communications between 2013–15.
**Wrong:** 2009–’12, ’09–’12

If the range occurs outside a sentence, such as in a heading, advertisement or flier, a hyphen or en dash is often preferable. Depending on design, adding a single space to each side of the hyphen or en dash can improve appearance and readability.

**Right:** Monday – Friday, Sept. 14–22, Sept. 14 – Oct. 5, 30–50 percent

**Rankings**

Use the abbreviation “No.” before a numeral when writing about rankings. If a ranking works best with words like “most” or “best,” you may use ordinal numbers instead, such as “third best undergraduate teaching.” Do not use the pound symbol (#) in text, but it’s fine for stylized callouts in design. Heed conventions for using numbers in text found on pp. 26–27.

**Right:** Georgia State University is ranked the No. 2 most innovative university in the nation.
**Right:** According to U.S. News & World Report, Georgia State offers the fourth best risk management and insurance program in the U.S.
**Wrong:** Georgia State has the nation’s #10 most ethnically diverse student body.

**Telephone Numbers**

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

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

If the publication may be distributed outside the university, 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:** 404-413-2000  
**Wrong:** (404) 471-2000

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

**Right:** Call me at 404-413-3025/1357.  
**Right:** Phone: 404-555-3151  
Fax: 404-555-5812  
Cell: 470-555-8139

**Time**
Indicate time with numerals before “a.m.” or “p.m.” (always lowercase and always followed by periods). When writing a time that falls on the hour, state only the hour before “a.m.” or “p.m.” (Don’t use “:00.”)

In editorial content, “o’clock” is acceptable but should be avoided in most communications. Use “noon” and “midnight” instead of “12 p.m.” or “12 a.m.”

To designate a range of time, use a hyphen or en dash. Depending on design, adding a single space to each side of the hyphen or en dash can improve appearance and readability.

**Right:** 3 p.m., 3–5 p.m., 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.  
**Right:** Noon–1 p.m.  
**Right:** The concert begins at 8:30 p.m.  
**Wrong:** 3:00 p.m.  
**Wrong:** 3 p.m.–5 p.m.  
**Wrong:** 12 noon, 12 p.m.  
**Wrong:** 12 midnight, 12 a.m.

When designating a time of day along with its date and day of the week, follow this sequence: day of week, date, time of day.

**Right:** Wednesday, Sept. 8, at 2 p.m.
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: A’s, B’s, C’s
Right: p’s and q’s
Right: ABCs, IOUs, VIPs, SOS’s
Ampersands (&)
Do not use ampersands to replace the word “and” wherever it strikes your fancy. Ampersands should be used only in place of the word “and” when it occurs in the names and titles of departments, colleges, programs, companies, centers, buildings and so on — and they should be used in every instance. Using ampersands like this allows your reader to distinguish easily between items that contain the word “and” while limiting the confusion that its frequent repetition can precipitate.

Right: The Ernest G. Welch School of Art & Design operates out of the Arts & Humanities Building.
Right: She is a professor with the Department of Applied Linguistics & English as a Second Language.
Right: Mathematics & Statistics, Physics & Astronomy
Right: Budget & Planning and Finance & Administration are part of the same division.
Wrong: Chemistry & Astronomy, Parking & Transportation
Wrong: Public Relations and Marketing Communications and Auxiliary and Support Services worked together on the project.
Wrong: Visit Student Health Promotion for health & wellness information.

And/or
Avoid this informal construction.

Right: Some university departments automatically withdraw any student who enrolls in a course without first meeting its course prerequisites, grade point average requirements or both.
Wrong: Some university departments automatically withdraw any student who enrolls in a course without first meeting its course prerequisites and/or grade point average requirements.

City, State
Place a comma between the city and the state name, and another comma after the state name, unless ending a sentence. (See also “States” on pp. 17–18.)

Right: They moved from Tucson, Ariz., to Athens, Ga.
Wrong: Kansas City, Mo. is the site of the conference.

Commas
Do not use the serial comma — that is, a comma that comes before a coordinating conjunction (such as “and” or “or”) at the end of a series of three or more components. Use a comma only if the last or penultimate item itself contains a coordinating conjunction.
PUNCTUATION PRIMER

Right: The flag of the United States is red, white and blue.
Right: The restaurant offered pancakes, french toast, and ham and eggs.

If you’re combining two independent clauses into one sentence (known as a “compound sentence”), you must join them either with a semicolon or a comma followed by a coordinating conjunction. A comma without a coordinating conjunction creates a comma splice. A coordinating conjunction without a comma creates a run-on sentence. These are embarrassing, elementary errors that should never appear in university communications.

Wrong: The designs have been approved, plans are moving forward.
Wrong: The multiuse facility will seat close to 8,000 and we hope to break ground next summer.
Right: Crews began the demolition of Kell Hall in April, and work will progress through the summer.

The punctuation is different if you’re writing a sentence that combines an independent clause and a dependent clause. (A dependent clause cannot stand on its own and is introduced by a subordinating conjunction, such as “although,” “because,” “if,” “once,” “when,” “while” and so on.) When the sentence begins with the dependent clause and ends with the independent clause, place a comma between them. When the sentence begins with the independent clause and ends with the dependent clause, do not separate them with commas.

Right: While students trundled up the ramps to class, the rest of the building was bustling with business and activity.
Right: He always thought of himself as an effective leader although he had never accomplished anything.

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

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 postmodern 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.”

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

If you’re using an interruptive phrase or clause in the middle of a sentence, make sure you’ve inserted commas on both sides of it.

**Right:** Mark Becker, president of Georgia State University, spoke at the meeting.  
**Right:** The provost’s hiring initiatives, such as the Second Century Initiative and the Next Generation Program, introduced leading scholars to departments throughout the university.  
**Right:** A pair of leg irons and a few pieces of gold Akan jewelry, which pirates clipped and used as money, testify to the ship’s involvement in the slave trade.

**Colons and Semicolons**

Use a colon at the end of an independent clause to direct attention to a list, explanation, quotation or amplification that follows. Do not use a colon between a verb and its direct object or after a phrase used to introduce examples (“such as,” “including”).

**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: admission criteria, financial aid and student activities.  
**Wrong:** The topics were: leadership; motivation; enthusiasm; creativity.

Use a semicolon to divide two closely related independent clauses when they are not connected by a conjunction. Semicolons also commonly connect two independent clauses that use conjunctive adverbs such as “therefore” and “however.”

**Right:** We already received your report; the follow-up mailing is not needed.  
**Right:** We already received your report; however, we should still meet.

Semicolons are also needed to separate items in a series of three or more components if one or more items in the series itself contains commas.
However, it’s often best to reword the series to obviate the need for the semicolons, which can clog up the flow of your sentence.

**Wrong:** The graduate teaching assistant plans class lectures and exercises, grades essays and tests, and leads engaging, challenging and constructive conferences with each student.

**OK:** The graduate teaching assistant plans class lectures and exercises; grades essays and tests; and leads engaging, challenging and constructive conferences with each student.

**Better:** The graduate teaching assistant plans class lectures and exercises, grades essays and tests, and engages each student with constructive criticism at personalized conferences.

**Company Names**
Follow the organization’s lead, and reproduce formal titles without modification. Heed special punctuation (including ampersands), and use “Co.,” “Cos.,” “Inc.” and “Ltd.” if appropriate.

When you refer to a company without its formal title, use the term “company,” not “co.” Never use a comma before “Inc.” or “Ltd.”

For possessives: JPMorgan Chase & Co.’s profits.

Always spell out the word “company” in theatrical organizations.

**Em dashes (—)**
Use em dashes to set off and emphasize an explanation, amplification or important parenthesis. An em dash (—) is not an en dash (–), which is what many word processors automatically use when the user types two hyphens (-) in a row. Make sure you’re using the correct punctuation, and put a space on either side of each em dash.

**Right:** When Queen Anne’s War — fought between Great Britain and France for control of North America — ended in 1713, many privateers immediately lost their jobs.

**Right:** He needed to navigate his ships through a perilous coastal channel — narrow, shallow and full of shifting shoals.

**Exclamation Points**
Use them rarely.
Hyphenation

Compound Adjectives

Hyphenate prenominal compound adjectives — that is, two words that form a single unit that modifies a noun that follows it. In most cases, the same two words that constitute a hyphenated adjectival compound before a noun are written as two separate words when used differently.

Right: a six-lane highway, a highway with six lanes; a middle-class neighborhood, the neighborhood is middle class; gender-inclusive pronouns, be gender inclusive; a bike-friendly campus, the campus is bike friendly; high-quality standards, the standards are high quality; world-renowned faculty, the faculty are world renowned

Even if the words precede the noun they modify, do not hyphenate them if the first word is an adverb ending in “-ly.”

Right: newly renovated library, geometrically exact equations
Wrong: commonly-held belief, federally-funded research

To hyphenate in a series, follow this example:

Right: He wrote 10- and 20-page papers.
Right: She took classes in pre- and postmodern British literature.

Prefixes and Proper Nouns and Adjectives

In general, words formed with prefixes (such as “multi-,” “trans-” and “un-”) are not hyphenated, whether they’re used as nouns, verbs, adjectives or adverbs: “multimedia,” “transcontinental,” “unwrap.” Exceptions include words with repeated i’s or a’s (“anti-intellectual,” “multi-institutional,” “meta-analysis”), compounds containing proper nouns and adjectives, and prefixes that precede open compounds.

When a prefix precedes a proper noun or adjective, place a hyphen after the prefix and keep the proper noun or adjective capitalized: “anti-Christian,” “mid-October” and “non-Hispanic” but “antithetical,” “midcentury” and “nonprofit.”

If a prefix precedes an open compound, such as “vice president,” or a proper noun phrase of more than one word, such as “Vietnam War,” use an en dash instead of a hyphen and leave the other words open: “ex–vice president,” “pre–Vietnam War.”

If one or more components of a hyphenated name contain more than one word, use an en dash to connect them: “Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport” but “Atlanta–Fulton County Stadium.”
PUNCTUATION PRIMER

Open, Closed and Hyphenated Compounds
Here’s a short guide to commonly used open (two separate words), closed (one word) and hyphenated (two words connected with a hyphen) compounds. When in doubt, consult the Associated Press Stylebook or Webster’s New World College Dictionary, and stay consistent.

A
all-terrain, antebellum

B
bilingual, bisexual, byline

C
callout (noun), call out (verb), child care, co-author, co-chair, co-sponsor, coeducational, cooperative, copay, course work

Note: As stipulated by AP style, hyphenate nouns, adjectives and verbs formed with “co” that indicate occupation or status but keep the rest closed.

D
database, data center, decision-maker (noun), decision-making (noun and adjective)

E
e-mail, ex-marine, ex–state senator, extracurricular

F
follow-up (noun), follow up (verb)

full-time (always hyphenated): a full-time employee (adjective), she’s working full-time (adverb)

-free (always hyphenated): fat-free steak, a soda that’s sugar-free

fundraiser, fundraising (one word in all cases): fundraising is difficult (noun, the activity), the fundraising campaign (adjective, relating to the activity), we are holding a fundraiser (noun, event), he is a fundraiser (noun, person)

G
grade point average (neither hyphenated nor capitalized)

H
half-asleep, a half hour, a half-hour meeting, halfhearted, halftime, halfway
I
interoffice, interrelated

J
jump-start

L
lifestyle, lifelong, long-term strategy (adjective), in the long term (noun)

M
mainframe, microcomputer, minivan, multimedia, multipurpose, multiuse

N
nonnegotiable, nonprofit, nonviolent

O
-old: a 3-year-old (noun), a 3-year-old child (adjective before noun), a child who’s 3 years old (adjective after noun), centuries-old conflict

on-campus movies (adjective), there are movies on campus each week (prepositional phrase), off-site (always hyphenated), on-site (always hyphenated)

P
part-time (always hyphenated): part-time job (adjective), working part-time (adverb)

percent, drive a pick-up (noun), pick up that trash (verb), playoffs, postdoctoral, postgraduate, preempt, preexisting, preschool

R
reelect, reexamine, reevaluate, reinforce

Note: In general, don’t hyphenate “pre-” and “re-” even when they’re followed by another e. There are exceptions, however. Consult the Associated Press Stylebook or Webster’s New World College Dictionary to be sure.

S
self-conscious (adjective before and after noun), self-defense, self-destructive (adjective before and after noun), self-restraint, selfless, selflessness

semicolon, short-term solution (adjective), in the short term (noun), startup (noun, a type of company), subbasement, subdomain
PUNCTUATION PRIMER

vice president, viceroy

year-round availability (adjective), offered year-round (adverb)

Sports
When describing the score or outcome of a sports competition, follow this example:

- **Right:** Running back Taz Bateman powered through the line during a 34-7 rout of in-state rival Georgia Southern last December.

Quotes and Quotations

*Note:* The use stipulated here prevails in the United States. The United Kingdom and most other non-American anglophone countries use a different style.

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

- **Right:** She told us to “stay in school,” which was good advice.
- **Wrong:** He said, “I’m going to the store.”
- **Wrong:** He said, “I’m going to the store”.

Dashes, exclamation points and question marks go inside quotation marks when they apply to the quote. 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:** At 1,288 words, perhaps the longest sentence in all of English literature occurs in Faulkner’s “Absalom, Absalom!”
- **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”?

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 begins with open quotation marks, but only the final paragraph contains closing quotation marks.
Addressing the crowd, he continued: “It is for these that we speak. We do not come as aggressors. Our war is not a war of conquest. We are fighting in the defense of our homes, our families and posterity. We have petitioned, and our petitions have been scorned. We have entreated, and our entreaties have been disregarded. We have begged, and they have mocked when our calamity came.

“We beg no longer; we entreat no more; we petition no more. We defy them!

“The gentleman from Wisconsin has said he fears a Robespierre. My friend, in this land of the free, you need fear no tyrant who will spring up from among the people. What we need is an Andrew Jackson to stand as Jackson stood, against the encroachments of aggregated wealth.”

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

People With Disabilities
Do not focus on a 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 in society, and do not refer to people without disabilities as “normal.”

The following incomplete list of examples is taken from “Guidelines for Reporting and Writing About People with Disabilities.” For more information, visit rtcil.org/products/media/guidelines.

**Better:** person with a disability, person with ADHD, person with autism, girl who is blind, person with a brain injury, woman who has a brain injury, boy with an acquired brain injury, brain injury survivor, woman who is deaf or hard of hearing, person with a developmental disability, cancer survivor, burn survivor, adult with burns, person with Down syndrome, people living with HIV or living with AIDS, person with a learning disability, people with psychiatric disabilities or illnesses, people with mental disorders, person with epilepsy, little person, child with a speech disorder, woman without speech, a man with paraplegia, woman who is paralyzed, person with a spinal cord injury, stroke survivor, person who had a stroke, person who is substance dependent, a man in recovery

**Avoid:** abnormal, AIDS victim, alcoholic, autistic, brain damaged, burn victim, crazy, demented, disabled, disfigured, dumb, drug addict, epileptic, handicapped, harelip, Mongoloid, mute, special, subnormal, retarded, slow learner, stroke victim

Races and Ethnicities
Always ask individual preference.

**African American, Black**
It’s acceptable to use these terms interchangeably to describe black people in the United States. When referring to a specific individual, use the term he or she prefers. Do not hyphenate “African American,” and lowercase “black.”

**American Indian, Native American**
These 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 and so on. To specify someone who was born in the U.S. but isn’t Native American, use “native-born.”
SENSITIVITIES

Asian, Asian American
Use “Asian” when referring to anyone from Asia, but use “Asian American” (not hyphenated) when specifically referring to those of Asian ancestry who are American citizens.

Mexican American, Hispanic, Latino, Latina, Latinx
Use “Mexican” when referring to anyone of Mexican citizenship, and use “Mexican American” (not hyphenated) when referring to those of Mexican ancestry who are permanent residents or citizens of the United States. “Hispanic,” “Latino” and “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.

The recently coined gender-neutral “Latinx” is not considered a standard word. You can use it in quotations, descriptions of people who request it and names of organizations, but always include a succinct explanation (for example, “the gender-neutral variant of Latino”).

Caucasian, White
In most cases, use “white” (lowercase). Don’t use “Caucasian” (capitalized) as a synonym for “white.” “Caucasian” and “Caucasoid” should only refer to the specific anthropological group they denote.

Fraternities and Sororities
Use the preferred references: fraternities and sororities. The terms “Greeks” and “Greek organizations” are OK. Don’t use the term “frats.”

Gender
Take a little extra time to construct your sentences so you can avoid having to use gender-specific terms. For example, by pluralizing antecedents (“readers” instead of “the reader,” “students” instead of “each student”), you can then use plural pronouns (“they,” “them,” “their”), thereby avoiding the awkward but gender-inclusive constructions “he or she” and “his or her.” Do not use plural pronouns to refer to a singular antecedent.

Wrong: Every student must pay their tuition on time.
Right: Students must pay their tuition on time.

Use “chair” instead of “chairman,” “server” instead of “waiter” or “waitress,” “mail carrier” instead of “mailman” and so on.

Religious Holidays
To respect the variety of religious beliefs on our campuses, use “holiday party” instead of “Christmas party” and “winter break” rather than “Christmas break.”
SENSITIVITIES

Sexual Orientation
Gay and Lesbian
“Gay” is an acceptable term for homosexuals (primarily males) but is best used as an adjective instead of a noun — for example, “gay man” as opposed to “the gays.” “Lesbian” is preferred for women. When possible, use “gay and lesbian.” Where space is an issue, “gay” is acceptable to include both gays and lesbians.

“Homosexual” is the medical and clinical term for gays and lesbians. “Gay” or “lesbian” is the preferred term in all contexts, except medical or clinical.

Gay, lesbian and bisexual people use various terms to describe their relationships. If possible, ask the individual what term he or she prefers. Otherwise, “partner” is generally acceptable. “Same-sex marriage” is preferred to “gay marriage” because it is more inclusive and technically accurate.

Do not use the term “gay lifestyle.” There is no one gay lifestyle just as there is no one heterosexual lifestyle.

LGBT and LGBTQ
While there are many variants of these initialisms, these are the two most standard forms. The letters stand for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning communities.

Transgender
“Transgender” is an umbrella term that refers to people whose physical and sexual characteristics may not match the sex they were assigned at birth. 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.”

Nonbinary Pronouns
Some transgender individuals use third-person plural pronouns (“they,” “them,” “their”). While not standard, this practice may be accommodated if the subject of a story requests it as long as the writer provides a brief explanation (“Jessie, who prefers to use neutral pronouns, returned for their final semester”).

Gender-neutral pronouns such as “hir,” “xe” and “zir” are not standard and should be avoided in university communications unless they are the subject of a story, in which case an explanation must be provided.
TITLES

General Rules
Put quotation marks around the 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 and Journals
The title of an academic paper or journal article should be put inside quotation marks. The name of a journal should be written in title case without quotation marks or italics.

Right:  His paper, “The Rhetoric of Neoclassical Poets,” was published in Classical Literature Quarterly.

Books
Use quotation marks for most book titles (including common textbooks), but do not use them for the titles of reference books, such as dictionaries and encyclopedias. Use quotation marks for book chapters or individual selections within such volumes.

Right:  He used the Associated Press Stylebook and the Chicago Manual of Style to write his first best-selling novel, “Human Taxidermy.”
Right:  The short stories “Dry September” and “Red Leaves” are included in the “Collected Stories of William Faulkner.”

Courses
Use title case for course titles, but do not use quotation marks or italics.

Magazines and 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, Harper’s Magazine

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


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

TITLES

Movies, Theater, Television and Radio
Put quotation marks around the titles of movies, plays, video games, and television and radio shows and episodes.

Right: Adam Pinney (B.A. ’02) took home the Grand Jury Award at the 2016 South by Southwest Film Festival for his feature film, “The Arbalest.”
Right: “League of Legends” is the most popular esport and, by some estimates, the most popular video game in the world.
Right: Many critics concur that “The Suitcase” is among the best episodes of “Mad Men.”

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”
Right: Philip Glass’s Violin Concerto No. 2 is titled “The American Four Seasons.”
New terms and variations emerge rapidly. For the most part, we defer to the Associated Press Stylebook as our guide, but there are exceptions.

**Frequently Used Terms**

- email (no hyphen)
- Internet (capitalized)
- intranet (lowercase)
- log in (verb), login (noun)
- log out (verb), log off (verb)
- multimedia (one word, no hyphen)
- offline (one word, no hyphen)
- online (one word, no hyphen)
- Web (capitalized)
- webcast
- webmaster
- webpage, website

**Log In**

The preferred phrasal verb is “log in” — not “log on,” “log onto” or “log into.” Do not replace “in” with “on,” “into” or “onto.” Note that while it is natural to say one is “logged in” without an object, no one would say he or she was “logged into.”

- **Right:** Students should log in to PAWS regularly.
- **Right:** I’m already logged in.
- **Wrong:** Use your CampusID to log onto PAWS.
- **Wrong:** Log into BrightSpace to submit your essay.

**Web Addresses (URLs)**

When referencing a Web address (or URL, the initialism for “universal resource locator”) in text, write only the root domain (such as “gsu.edu” or “outlook.com”) and the appropriate path. Omit the protocols “http” and “https,” the slashes that follow, the abbreviation for World Wide Web (“www”) and the slash at the end of the address.

- **Wrong:** https://news.gsu.edu/
- **Right:** news.gsu.edu
- **Wrong:** www.gsu.edu
- **Right:** gsu.edu
- **Right:** admissions.gsu.edu/scholarships

Always shorten long URLs for Georgia State webpages by deleting everything between the domain (or subdomain, if applicable) and the last part of the directory.

- **Wrong:** https://admissions.gsu.edu/bachelors-degree/experience/visit/
- **Right:** admissions.gsu.edu/visit
- **Wrong:** https://news.gsu.edu/magazine/fall2019/summerhills-next-act/
- **Right:** news.gsu.edu/summerhills-next-act
MECHANICS AND TRICKY WORDS

General Rules
Alumnus/Alumni and Alumna/Alumnae
These words are taken from their Latin origins and denote graduates or former students of a school, college or university. 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. “Alumni” is often used for any group of graduates. “Alum” and “alums” are acceptable in conversational contexts.

Collective Nouns
Collective nouns such as “faculty,” “staff,” “band” and “family” can take either singular or plural verbs. Choose whichever you prefer, but stay consistent.

  Right: The staff is represented by the Staff Council.
  Right: Our faculty are dedicated and passionate.
  Right: Staff members disagree among themselves about the best benefits options.

Dangling (or Misplaced) Modifiers
Make sure your modifiers are modifying the correct things. Most of these errors occur at the beginning of a sentence. Introductory participial, prepositional and noun phrases (“Heading into her senior year,” “Once established in the new town,” “As the daughter of a distinguished veteran,” “A senior lecturer with the English Department”) will always describe or rename the subject, so make sure they’re actually talking about the subject of your sentence and not something else.

  Wrong: Heading into her senior year, anxieties about starting a successful career threatened to hurt her performance. (Anxieties don’t go to school.)
  Right: As she headed into her senior year, anxieties about starting a successful career threatened to hurt her performance.
  Right: Heading into her senior year, she struggled with anxieties about starting a successful career, which hurt her performance.
  Wrong: Once established in the new town, finding work came easy for him. (Actions such as finding work don’t move to new towns.)
  Right: Once established in the new town, he found work easily.
  Wrong: As the daughter of a distinguished veteran, the national anthem protests make me sick. (The national anthem is not the daughter of anyone; it’s a poem set to a gentleman’s club tune.)
  Right: As the daughter of a distinguished veteran, I’m disgusted by the national anthem protests.
MECHANICS AND TRICKY WORDS

Either/Or
Make sure you place these words before the things they are contrasting.

Wrong: I’m either going to get my life together, or I’m going to die.
Right: Either I’m going to get my life together, or I’m going to die.
Wrong: I’m going to either get my life together or die.
Right: I either need a safe place to stay or a one-way ticket out of town.
Right: I need either a safe place to stay or a one-way ticket out of town.

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 with 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.

Reflexive and Intensive Pronouns
Reflexive pronouns (“myself,” “yourself,” “himself,” “herself,” “itself,” “ourselves,” “yourselves” and “themselves”) reflect the action of the predicate back onto the subject and rename the subject as either an object or direct object. To be used correctly, they must be able to refer back to a noun or noun phrase already named in the sentence.

Right: I am getting ahead of myself.
Right: I gave myself three goals.
Right: She hurt herself.
Right: Let’s examine how the narrative represents itself.
Right: The professors invited themselves.

Intensive pronouns (the same set of words) are used in apposition to their referents to add emphasis. To be used correctly, they must be able to refer back to a noun or noun phrase already named in the sentence.

Right: I told them myself. (I myself told them.)
Right: The story emphasizes the dangers and weaknesses in narrative itself.
MECHANICS AND TRICKY WORDS

If neither of these cases applies, you must use a pronoun in either the subjective or objective case.

Wrong: You can tell your supervisor or myself.
Right: You can tell your supervisor or me.
Wrong: My wife and myself express our thanks.
Right: My wife and I express our thanks.

Relative Pronouns
That/Which
“That” and “which” are relative pronouns that begin relative clauses by replacing or referring to an action, idea, place or thing previously stated in the sentence.

When referring to a human being (or an animal with a name), relative clauses should start with the word “who” or “whom.” (See “Who/Whom” below.)

When referring to an object or nameless animal with an essential (also known as “restrictive”) clause — one that can’t be eliminated without changing the meaning of the sentence — relative clauses should begin with the word “that.” Essential clauses do not need commas.

When referring to an object or nameless animal with a nonessential (also known as “nonrestrictive”) clause — one that can be eliminated from the sentence without changing the basic meaning — relative clauses should begin with the word “which.” If nonessential 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 memorial celebrates the soldiers who died (Essential: There are many soldiers, but only some of them died. The memorial celebrates them only.)
Right: The memorial celebrates the soldiers, who died (Nonessential: The memorial celebrates all the soldiers, and all the soldiers are dead.)

Who/Whom
“Who” and “whom” are relative pronouns for persons. They begin relative clauses by replacing or referring to persons or animals with names either subjectively (you need to know “who” is responsible) or objectively (you need to know “whom” to contact).
MECHANICS AND TRICKY WORDS

The word “who” substitutes for the subjective-case pronouns “he,” “she” or “they”; “whom” substitutes for the objective-case pronouns “him,” “her” or “them.” If you don’t want to use “whom,” restructure your sentence. Don’t just use “who” when it is incorrect.

Glossary of Preferred Terms and Commonly Misused Words

admission/admissions
When used as a noun adjunct — a noun that modifies another noun right after it — “admission” needs to be singular: admission decision, admission process, admission application. Use “Admissions” (capitalized) to refer to the office of Undergraduate Admissions: visit Admissions, the new Admissions director.

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.

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.

alternate/alternative
As adjectives, “alternate” means “every other” or “happening or following in turns” while “alternative” means “available as another choice,” “substitute,” “existing outside traditional or established institutions or systems,” or “espousing or reflecting values outside the mainstream.”
MECHANICS AND TRICKY WORDS

around/about
“Around” should refer to a physical proximity or surrounding (“meet me around the entrance to the University Commons”) while “about” should indicate an approximation (“about 50 percent of our full-time faculty”).

beside/besides
Use “beside” to mean “at the side of” (“sit beside me”), “to compare with” (“beside other studies”) or “apart from” (“beside the point”). Use “besides” to mean “furthermore” (“besides, I said so”), “in addition to” (“and elm and maple trees besides”) or “other than” (“there’s no one here besides Bill and me”).

between/among
Use “between” to show a relationship between two objects only. Use “among” when there are more than two. “Between” takes an objective pronoun: me, her, him, them. “Between you and me” is correct. “Between you and I” is not.

biannual/biennial
“Biannual” is twice a year. “Biennial” is every two years.

CampusID
The Georgia State account name used for signing into technology is one capitalized word.

Civil Rights Movement
Treat this term as a proper noun and capitalize each word.

complement/compliment
A “complement” is something that completes or supplements. A “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.
MECHANICS AND TRICKY WORDS

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

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

curricular
adjective (College of Education & Human Development’s curricular philosophy)

curriculum
singular (the chemistry curriculum)

data
“Data” is usually a plural noun that takes a plural verb (“the data have been carefully selected”). On rare occasions, “data” can be used as a singular collective noun, where the group or quantity of data is regarded as a single object that takes a singular verb (“the data is sound”).

daylight-saving time
not daylight-savings time

different from/than
While “different from” is generally preferred, “different than” is acceptable in certain contexts, especially when the object is a clause. In general, use “from” when the object is a simple noun or noun phrase, but don’t be afraid to use “than” before a clause. For example, “He is different from his mother,” but “things are different than they used to be.”

disinterested/uninterested

dissociate
not disassociate

etitled/titled
“Entitled” means having the right to something (she is entitled to the inheritance). Use “titled” to introduce the name of a publication, speech or 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.
MECHANICS AND TRICKY WORDS

fewer/less
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.

first come, first served
Use the past participles of each verb. Your guests are not going to serve; they will be served.

flier/flyer
“Flier” is the preferred term for an aviator or a handbill. Use “flyer” only for the official names of buses and trains, such as Amtrak’s Heartland Flyer.

flounder/founder
As a verb, to “flounder” means to move about clumsily or with difficulty, as through mud, or to behave awkwardly. To “founder,” on the other hand, means to fall, fail, sink, stumble or become wrecked. People who are intoxicated or learning to swim may flounder about, but doomed companies or projects founder.

follow-up/follow up
Hyphenate the noun, and leave the phrasal verb open. You “follow up” on a meeting; the act of following up on a meeting may be called a “follow-up.”

grade point average
Neither hyphenate nor capitalize this term. Heed the rules for “Acronyms and Initialisms” on pp. 16–17, and use “GPA” after first reference.

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.”

healthcare/health care
It’s still best to use “health care” as an open compound.

historic/historical
“Historic” means important. “Historical” refers to any event in the past.

hopefully
“Hopefully” describes the hopeful manner in which someone speaks, appears or acts. Do not use “hopefully” to mean “it is to be hoped that,” especially as a sentence adverb.

Right: I hope we can go.
Right: She eyed the interview list hopefully.
MECHANICS AND TRICKY WORDS

**Right:**  The speaker delivered her address hopefully and passionately.
**Wrong:** Hopefully, we can go.
**Wrong:** The report will hopefully 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.

If you imply something, you’re sending out a message. If you infer something, you’re interpreting a message.

**info**
Use the full word “information” and restrict use of “info” to informal contexts.

**in regard to/in regards to**
Use “regard,” not “regards.” “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.

**intense/intensive**
“Intense” means of extreme force, degree or strength whereas “intensive,” as the counterpart to “extensive,” means with regard to force or degree. A strenuous experience is “intense,” but a concentrated approach to, say, agriculture or bombardment (more plants or bombs per area) is “intensive.”

**intro**
In general, use the full word “introduction” and restrict use of “intro” to informal contexts.

**irregardless**
The word is “regardless” or “irrespective.”

**-ize**
Do not coin verbs with this suffix, and avoid most of the words already coined with it, such as “finalize” (use “end” or “conclude”) or “utilize” (use “use”).
MECHANICS AND TRICKY WORDS

launch
While “launch” often denotes the commencement of projects, companies and products, other words are preferred in these contexts, such as “introduce,” “debut,” “initiate” and so on. Use “launch” to talk about physical objects — ships, rockets and the like.

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).

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

Right: The furnace literally exploded.
Right: He was so furious he figuratively blew his stack.

located
In most cases, you don’t need this word. Instead of saying “The Speaker’s Auditorium is located in Student Center East,” you can simply write, “The Speaker’s Auditorium is in Student Center East.” 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, and use “much” for bulk or quantity that is measured.

metro Atlanta
Unlike “Southern California” or “Northern Virginia,” “metro Atlanta” is not a proper noun. Never hyphenate it, and avoid alternative terms like “the metro area.”

Right: Georgia State has a $2.6 billion impact on metro Atlanta each year.
MECHANICS AND TRICKY WORDS

Wrong: Georgia State has a $2.6 billion impact on Metro Atlanta each year.
Wrong: metro-Atlanta, Metro-Atlanta

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

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 60 buildings.

nor
Use this word anytime you use “neither.”

OK/okay
Use “OK.”

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.

Panthers/Panthers'
You go to a Panthers football game and admire the Panthers’ offense.

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

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 in most cases.

pom-pom/pompon
“Pom-pom” is a rapidly firing weapon. A cheerleader’s prop is a “pompon.”
**MECHANICS AND TRICKY WORDS**

**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” or “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 precept or law, a guiding rule or code of conduct, or a method of operation.

**rebut/refute**
To “rebut” is to argue to the contrary. To “refute” is to win the argument. For example, a sound rebuttal may refute some sloppy logic.

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

**regime/regimen/regiment**
Use “regime” to denote a ruling government, a prevailing order, or a period of time during which such a government or order enjoys dominance. Use “regimen” to describe a system of dieting, exercising or therapy. Use “regiment” to refer to a military unit.

**resume/résumé**
Use “resume.” You don’t need the diacritical marks.

**RSVP**
An initialism from the French “répondez s’il vous plaît” that means “please respond.” Spell in all caps without punctuation. “RSVP” is a verb phrase, so don’t use it as a noun synonymous with “invitation” or “response” (such as “send in your RSVP”). At the same time, because it already contains an equivalent to “please,” you should never write “please RSVP.”
MECHANICS AND TRICKY WORDS

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
Our students don’t compose a single corpus. Use “student,” “students” or “student population” instead.

T-shirt
The “T-shirt” gets its name from its resemblance to the capital “T,” not its lowercase counterpart. Do not spell out “T” as “tee.”

    Right: The benefits package includes a T-shirt and a water bottle.
    Wrong: The benefits package includes a t-shirt and a water bottle.
    Wrong: The Alumni Association produced a marvelous tee.

that/which
See “That/Which” on p. 48.

theater/theatre
The preferred spelling 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 means one of a kind, without equal. “Unique” should never be modified by “truly,” “rather” or “very.” Either something is unique, or it isn’t.

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

who/whom
See “Who/Whom” on pp. 48–49.

-wise
Do not use this suffix to coin words such as “weatherwise.”
MECHANICS AND TRICKY WORDS

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

Commonly Misspelled Words
This is just a small sampling to get you thinking. When in doubt, consult a Webster’s New World College Dictionary.

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

Foreign Words
Some foreign words and abbreviations have been accepted universally into the English language: bon voyage, versus (vs.), ad nauseam and so on. They may be used without explanation if they are clear in the context.

Other foreign words and 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.”
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Better</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>absolutely essential</td>
<td>essential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accompany</td>
<td>go with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accordingly</td>
<td>so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>additional</td>
<td>added, more, other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>address</td>
<td>discuss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adequate enough</td>
<td>enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adjacent to</td>
<td>next to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>afford an opportunity</td>
<td>allow, let</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anticipate</td>
<td>expect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a large number/part</td>
<td>many/most</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a number of</td>
<td>some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a variety of</td>
<td>many, different</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appreciable</td>
<td>many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>approximately</td>
<td>about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as a means of</td>
<td>to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at the present time</td>
<td>now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>basic fundamentals</td>
<td>basics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be responsible for</td>
<td>handle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>capability/capable of</td>
<td>ability/can</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>center around</td>
<td>center in, at or on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comes into conflict</td>
<td>conflicts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commitment to excellence</td>
<td>quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comply with</td>
<td>follow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comprise</td>
<td>form, include, make up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>concerning</td>
<td>about, on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>constitutes</td>
<td>is, forms, makes up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>construct</td>
<td>build</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contact</td>
<td>call, write, reach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>currently</td>
<td>Omit it. It’s already implied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cutting edge</td>
<td>forefront, frontier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cutting-edge</td>
<td>leading, pioneering, progressive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Better</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>input</td>
<td>comments, advice, response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>joint cooperation</td>
<td>cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>just exactly</td>
<td>exactly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>legislation</td>
<td>law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>makes an attempt</td>
<td>attempts, tries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maximize</td>
<td>increase, enlarge, expand, broaden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minimize</td>
<td>decrease, lessen, reduce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>modify</td>
<td>change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>necessary (pre)requisites</td>
<td>(pre)requisites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>new innovations</td>
<td>innovations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>numerous</td>
<td>many, most</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>objective</td>
<td>aim, goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>optimum</td>
<td>best, greatest, most</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>output</td>
<td>comment, idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past experience</td>
<td>experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personnel</td>
<td>people, staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pre-planning</td>
<td>planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prioritize</td>
<td>put in order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prior to</td>
<td>before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provides guidance for</td>
<td>guides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>possibly might</td>
<td>might</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>postpone until later</td>
<td>postpone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>purpose is to</td>
<td>(don’t need it)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qualified expert</td>
<td>expert</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## PET PEEVES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Weak</strong></th>
<th><strong>Better</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(in the) real world</td>
<td>in the world, in society, in business, working world, professional world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>real-world problem</td>
<td>practical issue, business (or social) issue or problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>refer back</td>
<td>refer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>retain</td>
<td>keep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>send a communication to</td>
<td>notify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>similar to</td>
<td>like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>solicit</td>
<td>ask for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>state-of-the-art</td>
<td>latest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>try and fix</td>
<td>try to fix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unique</td>
<td>one of a kind (literal), exciting, new, unusual (as often used)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>utilize, utilization</td>
<td>use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viable</td>
<td>practical, workable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>warrant</td>
<td>call for, permit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whereas</td>
<td>since</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wide range</td>
<td>many, range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wide variety</td>
<td>many, variety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>without further delay</td>
<td>now, immediately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with the exception of</td>
<td>except for</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# PROOFREADERS’ MARKS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruction</th>
<th>Mark in Margin</th>
<th>Mark on Proof</th>
<th>Corrected Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>delete</td>
<td>delete the word</td>
<td>delete the word</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>close up; delete space</td>
<td>close the gap</td>
<td>close the gap</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>insert indicated material</td>
<td>missing</td>
<td>the word</td>
<td>the missing word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>let it stand</td>
<td>no problem</td>
<td>no problem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spell out</td>
<td>San Diego, CA</td>
<td>San Diego, California</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>new paragraph</td>
<td>...start of the trip. Finally, we...</td>
<td>...start of the trip. Finally, we...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transpose</td>
<td>painted the red or town</td>
<td>painted the town red</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>move left</td>
<td>move left</td>
<td>move left</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>move right</td>
<td>move right</td>
<td>move right</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>move down</td>
<td>move down</td>
<td>move down</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>move up</td>
<td>move up</td>
<td>move up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>align</td>
<td>line up here</td>
<td>line up here</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>insert space</td>
<td>too close</td>
<td>too close</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Punctuation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruction</th>
<th>Mark in Margin</th>
<th>Mark on Proof</th>
<th>Corrected Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>period</td>
<td>The end</td>
<td>The end</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comma</td>
<td>planes, trains and automobiles</td>
<td>planes, trains and automobiles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hyphen</td>
<td>full-color brochure</td>
<td>full-color brochure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>em dash</td>
<td>Now—last!</td>
<td>Now—last!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>colon</td>
<td>the following list</td>
<td>the following list</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>semicolon</td>
<td>Tom walked; John ran.</td>
<td>Tom walked; John ran.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apostrophe</td>
<td>Joe’s house</td>
<td>Joe’s house</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>double quotations marks</td>
<td>he said “No”</td>
<td>he said “No”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>single quotation marks</td>
<td>she said “Joe said村党支部”</td>
<td>she said “Joe said ’no’”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parentheses</td>
<td>attach the zipper</td>
<td>attach the zipper (figure 12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brackets</td>
<td>“They [the fans] overreacted.”</td>
<td>“They [the fans] overreacted.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asterisk</td>
<td>word</td>
<td>word</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>backlash</td>
<td>he/she</td>
<td>he/she</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>three ellipses</td>
<td>more...words</td>
<td>more...words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>four ellipses</td>
<td>more words</td>
<td>more words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Style

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruction</th>
<th>Mark in Margin</th>
<th>Mark on Proof</th>
<th>Corrected Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>uppercase</td>
<td>capital letters</td>
<td>Capital Letters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lowercase</td>
<td>lowercase</td>
<td>lowercase</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>small capitals</td>
<td>Small Capitals</td>
<td>SMALL CAPITALS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>italic</td>
<td>fashion magazine</td>
<td>fashion magazine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>roman</td>
<td>fancy words</td>
<td>fancy words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boldface</td>
<td>bold type</td>
<td>bold type</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wrong font</td>
<td>the rain fell</td>
<td>the rain fell</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>