



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

HEALTH

EDITORIAL STYLE GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

The *Texas A&M Health Editorial Style Guide* is designed to encourage consistency, clarity and accuracy across the many publications produced by the institution. It is intended for use with publications providing news and information for campus and community audiences, not scholarly manuscripts or academic materials. Although this guide does not hold the answer to every editorial quandary, it does provide a foundation upon which to base your writing decisions. Institution-wide consistency in writing style helps build credibility of our brand and high standards of accuracy and consistency are essential to conveying a positive, professional image of the institution.

This guide is a supplement to the [Associated Press \(AP\) Stylebook and Libel Manual](#) and [Webster's Collegiate Dictionary \(11th ed. or later\)](#), which are the official style and spelling references for the institution. When a choice of spelling is given, use the first option. The listings in this guide include the most frequently used rules as well as several departures from the *AP Stylebook*, where noted.

Note—the *AP Stylebook* and *Texas A&M Health Editorial Style Guide* may be updated periodically.

For additional guidance, contact the Office of Marketing and Communications at health.tamu.edu/about/admin/marcomm.html.

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PART 1

REFERENCING THE INSTITUTION

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ORGANIZATIONAL NAMES

The following outlines the way writers should refer to the schools, departments, centers, institutes and programs that make up the Texas A&M University Health Science Center (Texas A&M Health). All first usage references are displayed in bold text. Adhere to capitalization conventions and appropriate use of the ampersand for all references. Second and subsequent references to Texas A&M Health or schools are always appropriate on our own website since the full name is listed in the top banner.

When “Texas A&M University” appears first, there is no need to include “University” on first reference of Texas A&M Health, a school or institute. Example: *Texas A&M University researchers hope to answer important questions about COVID-19 in a new study. John Jones, assistant professor at Texas A&M School of Nursing, said this is the first study of its kind.*

Note—Acronyms should only be used for internal communications between faculty and staff. They should not be used in communications intended for or visible to external audiences.

THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

The Texas A&M University System (with a capital “T” in “the”)

- Subsequent Reference: Texas A&M System or the A&M System
- Do not use TAMUS

For more information, visit [The Texas A&M University System Writing Guidelines](#)

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Texas A&M University

- Subsequent Reference: Texas A&M
- Do not use TAMU or A&M

For more information, visit the [Texas A&M University Writing Guidelines](#)

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER

Texas A&M University Health Science Center (Texas A&M Health)

- Second Reference: Texas A&M Health
- Subsequent Reference: Texas A&M Health or the institution (lowercased)
- Do not use TAMU Health, A&M Health or TAMUH

CAMPUSES

Headquartered in Bryan-College Station, Texas A&M Health is one of the most comprehensive and geographically dispersed health science centers in the nation.

Our campus locations include:

- Bryan-College Station
- Dallas
- Kingsville
- Round Rock
- Corpus Christi
- Houston
- McAllen
- Temple

It's important to correctly reference the campus (other than Bryan-College Station) when/if a school has more than one campus. For example, on first reference, use "Texas A&M School of Medicine in Temple" and "Temple campus" (with "campus" lowercased) on second reference. Please note that the word "in" is always used to designate locations (name of the school "in" location). Commas and dashes are to be avoided. Subsequent references only continue to reference campus location if multiple campuses are mentioned.

When mentioning the Bryan-College Station campus, use a hyphen, not a slash (unless there's a compelling reason not to) and use the full name of Bryan-College Station for any reference to the campus in either city.

SCHOOLS

When mentioning multiple schools in a publication, list them alphabetically unless there is a specific reason to do otherwise. Also, lowercase any names of schools in a series of two or more: *schools of dentistry, medicine, nursing and pharmacy*.

When referencing more than one school, and where appropriate, utilize institutional language: *The schools of dentistry, medicine and nursing—components of Texas A&M Health—were involved in the annual Disaster Day event.*

For clarity and readability, avoid using acronyms for all public-facing communications.

Texas A&M University School of Dentistry

- Second Reference: School of Dentistry
- Subsequent Reference: the school (lowercased)

Texas A&M University School of Medicine

- Second Reference: School of Medicine
- Subsequent Reference: the school (lowercased)

Texas A&M University School of Nursing

- Second Reference: School of Nursing
- Subsequent Reference: the school (lowercased)

Texas A&M University Irma Lerma Rangel School of Pharmacy

- Second Reference: Rangel School of Pharmacy
- Subsequent Reference: the school (lowercased)

Texas A&M University School of Public Health

- Second Reference: School of Public Health
- Subsequent Reference: the school (lowercased)

Texas A&M University Intercollegiate School of Engineering Medicine

- Second Reference: Engineering Medicine
- Subsequent Reference: EnMed

DEPARTMENTS

On first reference, always use the name of the department, below, in conjunction with the name of the school the department belongs to: *Department of Humanities in Medicine at the Texas A&M School of Medicine* or *the Texas A&M School of Medicine Department of Humanities in Medicine*. On second reference, the full name of the department should be used (capitalized), but the school name need not be mentioned. On subsequent references, “the department” may be used. When mentioning multiple departments, list them alphabetically unless there is a specific reason to do otherwise.

School of Dentistry:

- Department of Biomedical Sciences
- Caruth School of Dental Hygiene
- Department of Diagnostic Sciences
- Department of Endodontics
- Department of General Dentistry
- Office of Research and Graduate Studies
- Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery
- Department of Orthodontics
- Department of Pediatric Dentistry
- Department of Periodontics
- Department of Public Health Sciences
- Department of Restorative Sciences

School of Medicine:

- Department of Humanities in Medicine
- Department of Medical Education
- Department of Medical Physiology
- Department of Microbial Pathogenesis and Immunology
- Department of Military Medicine
- Department of Cell Biology and Genetics
- Department of Neuroscience and Experimental Therapeutics
- Department of Primary Care and Rural Medicine
- Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences

School of Pharmacy:

- Department of Pharmacy Practice
- Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences

School of Public Health:

- Department of Environmental and Occupational Health
- Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics
- Department of Health Policy and Management
- Department of Health Behavior
- Department of Public Health Studies

CENTERS AND INSTITUTES

When the official name of a center or institute does not include Texas A&M, apply the Texas A&M Health name upon first reference, unless noted otherwise below.

Texas A&M Health Cardiovascular Research Institute*

- Subsequent Reference: the institute (lowercased)

Texas A&M Health Center for Airborne Pathogen Research and Tuberculosis Imaging*

- Subsequent Reference: the center (lowercased)

Texas A&M Health Center for Community Health and Aging*

- Subsequent Reference: the center (lowercased)

Texas A&M Health Center for Craniofacial Research & Diagnosis[^]

- Subsequent Reference: the center lowercased)

Texas A&M Health Center for Epigenetics and Disease Prevention*

- Subsequent Reference: the center (lowercased)

Texas A&M Health Center for Health Equity and Evaluation Research*

- Subsequent Reference: the center (lowercased)

Texas A&M Health Center for Health Organization Transformation*

- Subsequent Reference: the center (lowercased)
- Acronym: CHOT (INTERNAL USE ONLY)

Texas A&M Health Center for Infectious and Inflammatory Diseases

- Subsequent Reference: the center (lowercased)

Texas A&M Health Center for Microencapsulation and Drug Delivery*

- Subsequent Reference: the center (lowercased)

Texas A&M Health Center for Optimizing Rural Health

- Subsequent Reference: the center (lowercased)

Texas A&M Health Center for Translational Cancer Research

- Subsequent Reference: the center (lowercased)

Texas A&M Health Center for Translational Environmental Health Research

- Subsequent Reference: the center (lowercased)

Texas A&M Health Center of Excellence in Forensic Nursing*

- Subsequent Reference: the center (lowercased)

Texas A&M Health Institute of Ocular Medicine*

- Subsequent Reference: the institute (lowercased)

Texas A&M Health Southwest Rural Health Research Center*

- Subsequent Reference: the center (lowercased)

Texas A&M Health Center for Innovation in Advanced Development and Manufacturing

- Second Reference: Center for Innovation in Advanced Development and Manufacturing
- Subsequent Reference: the center (lowercased)

Texas A&M Health Clinical Learning Resource Center

- Second Reference: Clinical Learning Resource Center
- Subsequent Reference: the center (lowercased)

Texas A&M Health Clinical Science and Translational Research Institute

- Second Reference: Clinical Science and Translational Research Institute
- Subsequent Reference: the institute (lowercased)

Texas A&M Health Coastal Bend Health Education Center*

- Second Reference: Coastal Bend Health Education Center
- Subsequent Reference: the center (lowercased)

Texas A&M and Driscoll Children's Hospital Global Institute for Hispanic Health*

- Second Reference: Global Institute for Hispanic Health
- Subsequent Reference: the institute (lowercased)

Texas A&M Institute for Neuroscience*

- Second Reference: Institute for Neuroscience

Texas A&M Health Institute for Regenerative Medicine

- Second Reference: Institute for Regenerative Medicine
- Subsequent Reference: the institute (lowercased)

Texas A&M Health Institute of Biosciences and Technology

- Second Reference: Institute of Biosciences and Technology
- Subsequent Reference: the institute (lowercased)

Texas A&M Health Institute of Pharmacology and Neurotherapeutics

- Second Reference: Institute of Pharmacology and Neurotherapeutics
- Subsequent Reference: the institute (lowercased)

Texas A&M Health Ergonomics Center*

- Subsequent Reference: the center (lowercased)

Texas A&M Rural and Community Health Institute*

- Subsequent Reference: the institute (lowercased)

The USA Center for Rural Public Health Preparedness*

- Subsequent Reference: the center (lowercased)

*Board of Regents approved

^Grandfathered, functions as if Board of Regents approved

CLINICS

It's important to correctly reference the location when/if a clinic has more than one location. For example, "Texas A&M Health Family Care Bryan." Please note that commas and dashes are to be avoided.

- Center for Craniofacial Research and Diagnosis
- Center for Facial Pain and Sleep Medicine
- Center of Maxillofacial Prosthodontics
- St. Joseph and Texas A&M Health Network
- Texas A&M Health Advanced Heart Care
- Texas A&M Health Dr. M.C. Cooper Dental Clinic
- Texas A&M Health Family Care
- Texas A&M Health Hub
- Texas A&M Health Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery
- Texas A&M Health Psychiatry and Behavioral Health Care
- Texas A&M Health Telebehavioral Care
- Texas A&M Health Women's Care Plus

UNIVERSITY HEALTH SERVICES

Texas A&M University Health Services

- Subsequent Reference: University Health Services

INITIATIVES

Engineering Health

- Subsequent Reference: EnHealth (capitalized)
- Always include an explanation that mentions it as a collaboration between Texas A&M University Health Science Center (Texas A&M Health), Texas A&M College of Engineering and Houston Methodist Hospital.

Texas A&M Healthy South Texas

- Subsequent Reference: Healthy South Texas (capitalized)
- Always include an explanation that it is a collaboration between Texas A&M University Health Science Center (Texas A&M Health) and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. For more information, [see page 13](#).

Texas A&M Health Opioid Task Force

- Subsequent Reference: Opioid Task Force (capitalized)

BUILDINGS

Texas A&M Innovation Plaza

Innovation Plaza, located in the Texas Medical Center in Houston, is The Texas A&M University System's 5-acre mixed-use campus designed to cultivate collaboration in engineering, medicine, research and education. The building names are:

- Discovery Tower (home to Engineering Medicine; do not use EnMed Building)
- Life Tower (student housing with retail and dining)
- Horizon Tower (integrated education, research and office spaces)

TMC³

TMC³ is a 30-acre life science complex in the Texas Medical Center in Houston. Texas A&M Health is one of four TMC³ founding institutions, along with Baylor College of Medicine, UTHealth and MD Anderson Cancer Center. The facility can be recognized by its striking double helix shape.

Bryan Campus

- Clinical Building 1
- Health Professionals Education Building
- Medical Research and Education Building I
- Medical Research and Education Building II

College Station Campus

- School of Public Health Building
- Reynolds Medical Sciences Building

Dallas Campus

- Clinic and Education Building
- Main Building
- Sciences Building

DEGREES AND PROGRAMS

Note the lack of periods in the names of the degrees. This is a departure from AP Style. Capitalize the formal name of a degree (*Master of Science*), but lowercase the discipline (*Master of Science in nursing*) and the informal name (*master's degree in nursing*). See [academic degrees and credentials](#).

SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY

- Bachelor of Science in dental hygiene (BS)
- Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS)
- Master of Science in oral biology (MS)
- Doctor of Philosophy in oral biology (PhD)
- Advanced dental education certificate programs

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

- Doctor of Medicine (MD)
- Doctor of Philosophy in medical science (PhD)
- Master of Science in medical science (MS)
- Master of Science in education for healthcare professionals (MS)
- Education for Healthcare Professionals certificate
- Doctor of Medicine “Plus” (MD Plus)
 - Master of Business Administration (MBA)
 - Master of Public Health (MPH)
 - Master of Science in medical science (MS)
 - Master of Science in engineering (MS)
 - Master of Science in education for healthcare professionals (EDHP)

Dual Degree Programs:

- EnMed (currently part of MD Plus dual degree program)
- Doctor of Medicine and Doctor of Philosophy (MD/PhD)

SCHOOL OF NURSING

- Bachelor of Science in nursing (BSN)
- Master of Science in nursing (MSN), nursing education
- Master of Science in nursing (MSN), family nurse practitioner
- Master of Science in nursing (MSN), forensic nursing
- Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)
- Multidisciplinary Graduate Certificate in Forensic Health Care

RANGEL SCHOOL OF PHARMACY

- Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD)
- Doctor of Philosophy in pharmaceutical sciences (PhD)
- Dual Degree Programs:
 - Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) Plus Master of Business Administration (MBA)

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

- Bachelor of Science in allied health (BS)
- Bachelor of Science in community health (BS)
- Bachelor of Science in public health (BSPH)
- Master of Public Health (MPH)
- Master of Health Administration (MHA)
- Master of Health Science in health education (MS)
- Doctor of Public Health (DrPH)
- Doctor of Philosophy in health services research (PhD)
- Doctor of Philosophy in health education (PhD)
- Minor in health
- Minor in public health
- Minor in occupational safety and health
- Graduate Certificate in Global Health
- Maternal and Child Health (MCH) certificate
- Health Systems Management (HSM) certificate
- Dual Degree Programs:
 - 3+2 Bachelor of Science and Master of Public Health (BSPH/MPH)

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH, CONT'D.

- 3+2 Bachelor of Science in interdisciplinary engineering and Master of Public Health in occupational safety
- 3+2 Bachelor of Science in industrial engineering and Master of Public Health in occupational safety
- Master of International Affairs/Master of Public Health (MIA/MPH)
- Doctor of Medicine/Master of Public Health (MD+MPH)
- Juris Doctor/Master of Public Health in health policy and management (JD/MPH)

INSTITUTE OF BIOSCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY

- Doctor of Philosophy in medical science (PhD) through the School of Medicine

PEOPLE AND TITLES

ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE TITLES

Capitalize a formal title when it precedes a name (*Dean John Jones; Professor of Biology James Smith; Chancellor John Sharp*). Lowercase a formal title after a name (*John Jones, dean of the School of Medicine; James Smith, a professor of biology*). One exception: Capitalize a named professorship both before and after a name (*Distinguished University Professor of Biology James Smith; James Smith, Distinguished University Professor of Biology*). However, do not capitalize “emeritus.”

Clinical titles should be listed after the Texas A&M-affiliated title (*Tim Boone, vice dean of the Texas A&M School of Medicine in Houston and chair of the Department of Urology for Houston Methodist Hospital*).

ACADEMIC DEGREES AND CREDENTIALS

Do not use periods when abbreviating academic degrees. Note that this is a departure from AP Style. Put commas between the name and credentials, between each credential and after the list of credentials before continuing the sentence (*Kelly Smith, MD, PhD, is a clinical professor*). Credentials should be listed in the following order: Highest academic degree earned, licensure, certification (*John Smith, DNS, RN, FNP-BC*). Do not put “Dr.” before a name unless quoting someone. However, using the “Dr.” prefix on second reference is appropriate for patient care content such as patient-facing web pages, brochures, forms, advertisements, etc.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

Primary within text

Jon Mogford, PhD, chief operating officer and senior vice president of the Texas A&M University Health Science Center (Texas A&M Health)

Primary all other uses

Jon Mogford, PhD
Chief Operating Officer and Senior Vice President, Texas A&M Health

Formal reference

Jon Mogford, PhD
Chief Operating Officer and Senior Vice President, Texas A&M University Health Science Center (Texas A&M Health)

BOILERPLATES AND MESSAGING

The following boilerplate copy and key messages can be used in news releases, publications and in collateral materials to succinctly define what each institution or program represents. We encourage you to use this messaging, where appropriate in your materials, whether a full description or simply a sentence.

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER

Long version

Texas A&M University Health Science Center (Texas A&M Health) comprises five schools (dentistry, medicine, nursing, pharmacy and public health), an integrated University Health Services model, several research centers and institutes, and numerous outpatient clinics with a shared mission of advancing health care for all. We serve the state and beyond with campuses and locations in Bryan-College Station, Dallas, Temple, Houston, Round Rock, Kingsville, Corpus Christi, McAllen and Navasota. Learn more at health.tamu.edu or follow @TAMUHealth on Twitter.

Short version

Texas A&M University Health Science Center (Texas A&M Health) comprises five schools (dentistry, medicine, nursing, pharmacy and public health), University Health Services, several research centers and institutes, and outpatient clinics with a shared mission of advancing health care for all.

Messaging

Always aim to convey—without stating verbatim—the institution’s core values, mission and vision in content.

Core values:

- Excellence, integrity, leadership, loyalty, respect and selfless service
(alphabetical order per main campus’ convention)

Mission:

- Improve human health and quality of life—with a special attention to the underserved—across the state, around the nation and throughout the world by achieving excellence in education, discovery, clinical care and health promotion

Vision:

- Become one of the leading research-intensive, innovation-driven health science centers in the nation, and to develop individual institutes and centers that are transformative in their impact on human health

Brand pillars:

- The university as a community: The commitment to enriching the learning and working environment for all students, faculty and staff.
- Transformational education for all students: The commitment to strengthen every student’s education by providing transformational experiences and supporting timely graduation with low debt.
- Discovery & innovation for the world: The support for and utilization of all human and technological resources that contribute to solutions for the world’s toughest challenges.
- Impact on the state, the nation & the world: The integration of land-grant origins and research prowess with a steadfast commitment to serve the greater good near and far.

Aggie Code of Honor:

- An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do.
(Wording is per the Honor System Rules 20.1.2.1)

HEALTHY SOUTH TEXAS

Healthy South Texas combines the expertise of the Texas A&M University Health Science Center (Texas A&M Health) with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's one-of-a-kind, statewide reach to promote preventive health at the most local level of the community, improving the well-being of Texans for generations to come. This comprehensive, multi-disciplinary team engages families, enhances education, promotes behavior change, and improves quality of medical care and health outcomes. Learn more at healthytexas.tamu.edu.

ENGINEERING MEDICINE

EnMed, Texas A&M University's innovative engineering medicine track at Houston Methodist Hospital in the Texas Medical Center, is a collaboration between the Texas A&M School of Medicine and College of Engineering. The program is educating a new kind of doctor with an engineering mindset—a physician engineer, or “physicianeer”—who will invent transformational technology for health care's greatest challenges. It's the nation's first fully-integrated engineering and medical education curriculum accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) and allows graduates to receive both a doctorate of medicine and master's in engineering in four years. EnMed is housed within the Intercollegiate School of Engineering Medicine. Learn more at enmed.tamu.edu/.

- First reference: Engineering Medicine
- Second and subsequent references: EnMed

PART 2 GENERAL EDITORIAL GUIDELINES (A TO Z)

Please note that acronyms and abbreviations listed after an entry are acceptable on second reference.

A

abbreviations and acronyms

When using an acronym or abbreviation, spell out the full name on first reference, followed by the acronym or abbreviation in parentheses: *Food and Drug Administration (FDA)* or *body mass index (BMI)*. The abbreviation is then acceptable on second and subsequent references.

It is not necessary to note the acronym in parentheses if there is only one reference within the piece unless the entity is better known by its acronym than its full name: *The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)*.

If using an abbreviation in a headline, spell out the full text in the first few paragraphs.

To make abbreviations plural, add an “s” without apostrophe (*CEOs, HMOs*).

academic and administrative titles

Capitalize a formal title when it precedes a name (*Dean John Jones; Professor of Biology James Smith; Chancellor John Sharp*). Lowercase a formal title after a name (*John Jones, dean of the School of Medicine; James Smith, a professor of biology*). One exception: capitalize a named professorship both before and after a name (*Distinguished University Professor of Biology James Smith; James Smith, Distinguished University Professor of Biology*).

Clinical titles should be listed after the Texas A&M-affiliated title (*Tim Boone, vice dean of the Texas A&M School of Medicine in Houston and chair of the Department of Urology for Houston Methodist Hospital*).

academic degrees and credentials

Do not use periods when abbreviating academic degrees. Note that this is a departure from AP Style. Put commas between the name and credentials, as well as between credentials (*Kelly Smith, MD, PhD*). Credentials should be listed in the following order: Highest academic degree earned, licensure, certification (*John Smith, DNS, RN, FNP-BC*). Do not put “Dr.” before a name unless quoting someone. However, the “Dr.” prefix is acceptable on patient-facing materials, such as websites, advertisements, marketing collateral and social media posts.

MEng is an acceptable shortened form of Master of Engineering.

Use an apostrophe in *bachelor’s degree, a master’s, etc.*, but there is no possessive in *Bachelor of Science* or *Master of Science*, an associate degree (no possessive) and *doctorate* (not *doctor’s*). Capitalize the formal name of a degree (*Master*

of Science), but lowercase the discipline (*Master of Science in nursing*) and the informal name (*master’s degree in nursing*). The [degrees offered at Texas A&M Health](#) are listed above.

academic departments

Use lowercase except for words that are proper nouns or adjectives: *the department of history, the history department, the department of English, the English department*, or when department is part of the official and formal name: *Texas A&M School of Public Health Department of Health Policy and Management*. The [departments at Texas A&M Health](#) are listed above.

addresses

Use the abbreviations “Ave.,” “Blvd.” and “St.” only with a numbered address (*123 S. Main St.*) Spell out addresses and capitalize when part of a formal street name without a number (*The car wash is on South Main Street.*) Lowercase and spell out when used alone or with more than one street name (*Hawthorne and First streets*). All similar words (*Alley, Drive, Road, Terrace*) are spelled out.

addiction

Use “people-first” language; say “someone with opioid use disorder” (assuming opioids are the drug in question) or “a person in recovery” (assuming they are not actively using drugs). Do not use “addict.” [See Extra Help for Word Choice for additional details.](#)

adviser

Adviser is preferred over advisor (*academic adviser*), but advisory (*advisory council*).

Affordable Care Act (ACA)

“Obamacare” in quotation marks is also acceptable on second reference.

African American

No hyphen. This is acceptable for an American person of African descent. The word “Black” to denote race, ethnicity or culture should be capitalized.

ages

Always use figures (*a 5-year-old boy; John Smith was 30; a man in his 20s; a 2-hour-old infant; intended for 12-year-olds*) except when starting a sentence. Use hyphens to denote age ranges (*children ages 13-17*).

Aggie ring

Uppercase “Aggie” and lowercase “ring”

Aggie Spirit

Uppercase

alumnus, alumni, alumna, alumnae

“Alumnus” refers to a male graduate (plural: “alumni”). “Alumna” is a female graduate (plural: “alumnae”). Use “alumni” to refer to a group of mixed gender. At Texas A&M, the preferred term is generally “former students.”

Texas A&M class year may be added after a person’s name. If the person also had credentials listed, the order depends on whether his or her Texas A&M class year was in relation to that credential. For example, if Jane Doe’s only degree from Texas A&M was her MD, she would be listed as *Jane Doe, MD ’11*. However, if she earned her bachelor’s degree at Texas A&M and that was what was being listed, the order would go like this: *Jane Doe ’07, MD*. If she earned her bachelor’s degree and then a higher degree that was being listed as a credential both at Texas A&M, it would look like this: *Jane Doe ’07, MD ’11*. In general, the year should go next to the degree earned in that year, unless the credential corresponding to that class year is a lower degree and one that is not listed after the person’s name, in which case it will go by itself before the degrees. [See class year.](#)

a.m.

Lowercase. Insert one space between numeral and a.m. Use midnight instead of 12 a.m. Avoid repetition: *The meeting will be held from 9 to 11 a.m.* Artistic license regarding whether to include the periods may be taken in materials like invitations for reasons of space or design decisions.

American Health Care Act (AHCA)

A proposed replacement of the Affordable Care Act that passed the U.S. House of Representatives in May 2017.

ampersand

As a general rule avoid “&” unless part of an official name (*Procter & Gamble, AT&T, Texas A&M.*)

and/or

A clumsy construction that should be avoided when possible. It can typically be better expressed as XX or YY or both.

anesthesia, anesthetic

Anesthesia is a state; anesthetic is a substance that induces that state. (*An anesthetic is used to put a patient into anesthesia.*)

animal models

Use instead of “mice” or “rats,” or other specific name of an animal except in those rare instances when the species of the model is vitally important to the study.

anniversary

Since the meaning includes year, use ordinal numbers for recurrences of a date: *first anniversary*, not *one-year anniversary*.

annual

Use only to describe an event that has been held every year for at least two years. Do not use the word annual to describe a first-time event. Instead explain that it is planned to be held annually.

anti-

A modifier preceding a noun. The health care industry standard is not to use a hyphen (*anticancer agents, antiproliferative drugs*).

apostrophes

Use to indicate possession (*the doctor’s stethoscope, the nurse’s stethoscope*), or omitted letters or figures (*don’t, ’50*).

Use with degree names (*bachelor’s degree, master’s degree*). Exception: associate degree has no apostrophe.

In alumni graduation years and other instances to indicate missing text, make sure apostrophes face toward the missing characters (*’50s, grab ’n go, ’til*).

Do not use to indicate plurals in numerals or acronyms (*1990s, HMOs, RNs*).

Use only an apostrophe with singular proper names ending in “s” (*Achilles’ heel, Agnes’ book, Descartes’ theories, Hercules’ labors, Texas’ schools, Tennessee Williams’ plays*).

Use an apostrophe and an “s” with singular common nouns ending in “s” (*the hostess’s invitation, the witness’s answer*).

To indicate ownership, use a possessive form after only the last word if ownership is joint: *Fred and Sylvia’s apartment* (indicating that they share the apartment). Use a possessive form after both words if the objects are individually owned: *Fred’s and Sylvia’s books* (indicating that some books in question belong to Fred, others to Sylvia).

Always use ‘s if the word does not end in the letter “s,” even for words that end with an “s” sound (*Butz’s policies, the fox’s den, the justice’s verdict, Marx’s theories, the prince’s life, Xerox’s profits*). The following exceptions to the general rule for words not ending in s apply to words that end in an s sound and are followed by a word that begins with s: *for appearance’s sake, for conscience’s sake*. Use “’s” otherwise (*the appearance’s cost, my conscience’s voice*).

Do not add an apostrophe to a word ending in s when it is used primarily in a descriptive sense (*citizens band radio, a Cincinnati Reds infielder, a teachers college, a writers guide*). An ‘s is required, however, when a term involves a plural word that does not end in s: (*a children’s hospital, a people’s republic*).

Follow the rules above in composing the possessive form of words that occur in quasi-possessive phrases (*a day’s pay, two weeks’ vacation, three days’ work, your money’s worth*). Frequently, however, a hyphenated form is clearer (*a two-week vacation, a three-day job*). See [hyphens](#).

armed forces

Capitalize specific names of the branches of the armed forces (*U.S. Air Force*), but not the more generic term “armed forces.”

attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

This is the official medical term used to describe the condition, updated in the DSM-5. Refrain from using the outdated term, attention-deficit disorder (ADD).

autoimmune

B

baccalaureate

In most cases, the less formal bachelor’s degree is preferred, but this term is acceptable.

Bachelor of Science degree, Bachelor of Arts degree

See [academic degrees and credentials](#).

bi-

The rules in prefixes apply, but in general, no hyphen: *bifocal*, *bimonthly*, *bilateral*, *bipartisan*, *bilingual*.

bioterrorism

One word, lowercase

birth weight

Two words, no hyphen

blood-brain barrier

Bluetooth

Uppercase, one word

book and magazine titles

Use italics for the titles of books, magazines, newspapers, journals and other periodicals.

Use quotation marks for the titles of magazine and journal articles, book chapters, movies, songs, lectures and speeches, exhibits and conferences. Note that this is a departure from AP Style.

border

Texas-Mexico border, U.S.-Mexico border, U.S. border with Mexico along the Rio Grande River and the southern border are all acceptable ways to refer to the border areas on first reference. Thereafter, “the border” suffices.

breastfeed, breastfeeding

One word, no hyphen. Note that this is a departure from AP Style.

bulleted lists

When bulleted items are a short list, each item after the bullet can be lowercase, and no period is needed after each. However, if the bulleted item constitutes a sentence or near sentence, the items should each be capitalized, and there should be a period at the end of each. There is no need to put the word ‘and’ before the last item. Note that the use of bullets instead of dashes is a departure from AP Style. Put the list in alphabetical order unless there is a compelling reason to do otherwise.

C

canceled, canceling

capitalization

Do capitalize official, full, and proper names (such as a specific department, committee, program, celebration or legislative body) or trademarks and proprietary names of drugs.

Do not capitalize unofficial, informal, shortened, or generic names (*the center* or *the institute*). Likewise, do not capitalize names of subjects or disciplines (*cellular medicine*) or seasons, semesters or academic periods. ([Spring Break](#) is an exception.)

When listing more than one division, department or school, the collective noun should be lowercase: *the schools of dentistry and pharmacy*.

caregiver

One word, no hyphen

cellphone

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Note that “centers” is plural.

centuries

Use figures for centuries numbering 10 or higher (*21st century*). Spell out for numbers nine and lower (*fifth century*).

The modifier, standing alone uses one hyphen: *the mid-20th century*. As a compound modifier, two hyphens: *mid-20th-century America*. When talking about two centuries, spell out the word “to” for clarity: *late-19th century to mid-20th century*.

cesarean

Lowercase. Use “cesarean birth” or “cesarean section.” “C-section” is acceptable on second reference.

chair, chairman, chairwoman, chairperson

Chair is an academic title and refers to a person's position. Capitalize as a formal title before a name (*Chair John Smith*) but not when the title comes after the name as a parenthetical (*John Smith, chair of the finance committee*). Lowercase as a casual description: *The chair of the finance committee reports to the full board*. Note the use of the gender-neutral "chair" rather than one of the other options.

check up, checkup

Two words (verb); one word (noun): *Schedule a regular checkup to check up on the patient*.

class year

When referring to a former student in text, include the last two digits of his or her Texas A&M class year after the name with an apostrophe: *"The campus has changed since I was a student," said Samuel James '84*.

When referring to a couple who are both former students of Texas A&M, include the class year with an apostrophe after each person's name, with wife's name first. *Jane '70 and John Small '70*.

clinician

A health professional engaged in the care of patients, as distinguished from a health professional working in other areas; not exclusive to physicians.

close-up

Clostridium difficile (C-diff)

copayment, copay, coinsurance

One word, no hyphen

co-author, co-director, co-worker

Retain the hyphen when forming nouns, adjectives and verbs that indicate occupation or status. Note that this is a departure from Webster's New World College Dictionary.

colonia

The term "colonia," means a community or neighborhood in Spanish, and the term refers to a residential area along the Texas-Mexico border that may lack some of the most basic living necessities, such as potable water and sewer systems, electricity, paved roads, and safe and sanitary housing. On first reference put in quotation marks and define. Do not italicize.

colons

Capitalize the first word after a colon when it is the start of a formal quotation or complete sentence. Also, use colons only at the end of independent clauses, never after a linking

verb. (Wrong: *The winners are: Jonathan, Marisa, Mark and Emily*. Right: *There were four winners: Jonathan, Marisa, Mark and Emily*.) Colons may also be used with introductory phrases, such as *"To Whom It May Concern:"*

commas

Do not use the serial comma at the end of a short list before the word "and" unless needed for clarity. Commas are not used in names of people with Jr. and Sr.

See [Extra Help with Commas](#).

commencement

Lowercase unless used as part of a formal name, as in the School of Nursing 2023 Commencement Ceremony.

composition titles

See [book and magazine titles](#).

congenital disability

Use this term or "was born with a disability" instead of the derogatory term "birth defect."

core values

Capitalize when spelling out Texas A&M University Core Values. Lowercase when not including the name of the university: the core values. See page ["Boilerplates and Messaging"](#) for a list.

coronavirus, COVID-19

Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that infect humans and animals. Use "COVID-19" (short for "coronavirus disease 2019") to describe the disease caused by the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2.

course names

Capitalize formal names of courses, classes and workshops. (*Anatomy and Developmental Biology, or Biology 101*). Lowercase informal names: *biology class*.

credit hours

Use numerals (*4 credit hours*)

CT scan

CT scan is acceptable on first reference and stands for computerized tomography. In the past, this was known as a CAT scan, for computerized axial tomography.

curriculum

Curriculum is singular. The plural form is curricula.

D

dashes

There are two types of dashes (both of which are different than

a hyphen; see separate section on [hyphenation](#)). An **en dash** looks like this – and is longer than a hyphen but shorter than an em dash (which looks like this —). The en dash is about as big as an N, an em dash an M, hence the names. Do not put spaces around dashes. Note this is a departure from AP Style.

An **en dash** is used for showing ranges of numbers, especially time periods (3–6 p.m.; May–June; November 1–5, 2014). Use two en dashes in this sentence: *The temperature range in summer is 80–100 degrees, and people ages 60–80 are most likely to get heat stroke.* Microsoft Word will auto-insert an en dash when you type a hyphen with a space on each side (you have to go back and delete the spaces) or when using a Mac, use apple+num-hyphen to insert an en dash.

An **em dash** is used in running text like parentheses or a semicolon, or to offset a point for emphasis: *The caramel macadamia brownies—which she made from scratch—were still warm when I arrived.* In Microsoft Word, type “scratch--were” (two hyphens together) and then space, and Word will auto correct, or when using a Mac, type option+shift+hyphen.

data

a plural noun that normally takes a plural verb and plural pronoun (*these data show*). Singular is datum. Consult the AP Stylebook, under collective nouns, for exceptions. If you’re still in doubt, you can’t go wrong sticking with the plural verb.

dates

Use the form *May 14, 2012*, or *Oct. 31*. Months that are abbreviated on first reference (only when a specific date is used) are Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec. When used in a sentence with a year, a comma follows the year in all cases: *The deadline was May 20, 2014, for the application.*

decimals

Put a zero in front of a number less than one (0.15), and never go more than two decimal places without a specific need.

degrees

See [academic degrees and credentials](#).

department and division names

See [academic departments and divisions](#).

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

It’s no longer Veterans Administration

developmental disabilities

While it is acceptable to use the term developmental disabilities, it is preferable to use the name of the specific disability whenever possible.

diabetes

It should be lowercased and use numerals: type 1 diabetes, type 2 diabetes (not Type I or Type 2)

directions

Directions like “toward,” “backward” and “forward” are always preferred over the more British “towards,” “backwards” and “forwards.”

Disaster Day

Created by the School of Nursing in 2008, Texas A&M Health Disaster Day is one of the largest student-led interprofessional emergency response simulations.

diseases

Do not capitalize arthritis, emphysema, leukemia, migraine, pneumonia, etc. When the disease is known by the name of a person identified with it, capitalize only the individual’s name (*Hodgkin’s disease, Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinson’s disease*).

distance learning

No hyphen, even as compound adjective.

doctor, physician

Use “physician” in most cases, as “doctor” is the more general term and can refer to anyone with an advanced degree. Marketing copy and headlines may use “doctor.”

doctorate

Use “doctoral” as an adjective and “doctorate” as a noun: *John Jones, who has a doctorate in psychology, said the study was flawed. He earned his doctoral degree at Harvard.* See [academic degrees and credentials](#).

dollars

See [monetary units](#).

Down syndrome

Not Down’s syndrome or Downs Syndrome

drugs and medications

A chemical name describes a drug in terms of its chemical nature. The generic name is its nonproprietary name, regardless of its manufacturer. The manufacturer’s name for a product is called a trademark. Use the generic name of the drug whenever possible followed by a trademarked name in parentheses: *acetaminophen (Tylenol)*.

E

e-book

Lowercase, hyphenated; also, e-reader

E. coli

Acceptable in all references for *Escherichia coli* bacteria.

e.g.

This is an abbreviation of the Latin “for example;” don’t use in most contexts because it confuses people

electrocardiogram (ECG)

ECG is preferred as the acronym, but EKG is sometimes seen.

ellipses (...)

An ellipsis indicates words left out. When material is deleted at the end of one paragraph and at the beginning of the one that follows, place an ellipsis in both locations. However, do not use ellipses at the beginning and end of direct quotations. An ellipsis also may be used to indicate a thought that the speaker or writer does not complete. Substitute a dash for this purpose, however, if the context uses ellipses to indicate that words actually spoken or written have been deleted. Do not put spaces around ellipses. Note that this is a departure from AP Style.

email

No hyphen, and lowercase every letter in an email address (*tjones@tamu.edu*).

emergency department (ED)

Not “emergency room” when speaking generally about a hospital’s emergency services

emeritus/emerita/emeritae/emeriti

Honorary title bestowed on select retired faculty members. Use “emeritus” when referring to a man and “emerita” to a woman. “Emeritae” is the plural feminine form; “emeriti” is plural for a group of men, or a group of men and women. Do not capitalize unless before someone’s name: *Professor Emeritus John Smith*.

Engineering Health (EnHealth)**Engineering Medicine (EnMed)**

Spell out on first reference, and see [Engineering Medicine](#)

F**faculty**

When used as a collective noun, faculty is singular: *The faculty at Texas A&M University is known for preparing students for graduate school.*

fax

A shortened form of *facsimile*, it is lowercase.

FDA

See [U.S. Food and Drug Administration](#).

follow up, follow-up

Two words as verb: *The doctor will follow up with the patient next week.* Hyphenated as noun or adjective: *The study included a six-month follow-up.*

foundation

“Texas A&M Foundation” on first reference and then just “the foundation” unless also talking about the “12th Man Foundation” (no superscript) in the same text, in which case spell them both out every time.

fractions

Spell out fractions less than one that are not used as modifiers, using hyphens between the words: *two-thirds, four-fifths, seven-sixteenths*. In quotations, use figures for fractions, with a forward slash and a full space between the whole number (if any) and the fraction: *“He was 2 1/2 laps behind with four to go.”* Use numerals for precise amounts larger than one, converting to decimals whenever practical: 2.5.

front line, frontline

Two words (noun), one word (adjective): *He was on the front lines of the cancer fight as a frontline health official.* Note that this is a departure from AP Style.

full-time, full time

Hyphenated (adjective): *He has a full-time job.* Two words (adverb): *He works full time.*

functional MRI (fMRI)

See also [MRI](#).

functional needs

Preferred over the term “special needs”

G**gastrointestinal (GI)****grade point average**

GPA is an acceptable abbreviation on all references. GPAs normally have two numerals after the decimal (3.00, 4.25).

grade point ratio

Similar to grade point average: The term varies depending on the institution.

GPR is an acceptable abbreviation in all references.

grades

Use a capital letter when referring to a grade. When pluralizing, use an apostrophe before the s: *She made all A's last year.*

grade of tumors

Grades progress from 1 through 3, written with numerals.

graduate program

Do not use “graduate level program.”

H

half

Use “one and one-half” in formal or scientific context; “one and a half” is appropriate in more conversational contexts.

hand-washing

handheld, hand-held

One word as noun: *He pulled out his handheld.* Hyphenated as adjective: *He was working on his hand-held device.*

HDL cholesterol

No hyphen. HDL cholesterol can be used on first reference. HDL stands for high-density lipoprotein, the “good” cholesterol.

headlines

Uppercase only the first word and the first word after any colon. Note that this is a departure from AP Style. Use single quotation marks in headlines, if quotation marks are required.

Numerals are always acceptable in headlines, even when beginning the sentence.

health care

Spell as two words in either noun or adjectival form, unless in an official title that uses one word.

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

Hispanic

Always capitalize.

home page

hurricanes

Capitalize *hurricane* when it is part of the name that weather forecasters assign to a storm: *Hurricane Irma, Hurricane Harvey.* Use *it* and *its*, not *she*, *her* or *hers* or *he*, *him* or *his*, in pronoun references. Give the storm's current status

and history high in the story: *Harvey came ashore as a major hurricane and has been downgraded to a tropical storm.* After a storm is downgraded, phrasing such as *storm Irma* or *the remnants of Hurricane Irma* is also acceptable on first reference, with background later.

hyperlink

Provide hyperlinks directly on the referenced phrase or word; do not use extra words like, “Click Here.” *Some people need [extra help with commas.](#)*

hypertext

hyphens (-)

Hyphens are joiners. Use them to avoid ambiguity or to form a single idea from two or more words. When a compound modifier (two or more words that express a single concept) precedes a noun, use hyphens to link all the words in the compound (*a well-qualified student, a well-known physician*). The only exceptions are the adverb “very” and all adverbs that end in “-ly” (*a very good time, a highly trained lab tech, an easily remembered rule*). Use to designate dual heritage: *Italian-American, African-American* (but no hyphen for French Canadian or Latin American).

I

i.e.

This Latin term means “that is” and indicates an explanation is about to follow; don't use in most contexts because it confuses people; try “such as” instead.

inpatient

internet, intranet

lowercase

in utero, in vitro, in vivo

Do not italicize.

information technology (IT)

intensive care unit (ICU)

Not hyphenated even as a compound modifier (similar to health care).

international students

This phrase is preferred over foreign students.

intravenous (IV)

Internet Protocol (IP) address

iPod, iPad, iPhone

One word

italics

Italicize foreign words and Latin terms (*cum laude*, *summa cum laude*). See also [book and magazine titles](#).

J

journal articles

Use quotation marks. See [book and magazine titles](#).

journal titles

Italicize. See [book and magazine titles](#).

JPEG, JPG

Uppercase acronyms

Jr.

Do not precede with a comma. (*John Jones Jr.*)

L

land-grant

LDL cholesterol

No hyphen. LDL cholesterol can be used on first reference. LDL stands for low-density lipoprotein, the “bad” cholesterol.

legislation

Refer to bills as House Bill 1 or Senate Bill 1, then as H.B. 1 or S.B. 1 (periods but no spaces between the letters, then a space between the letters and the number) on subsequent references.

legislature

Capitalize in all references as part of legislative body (*the Texas Legislature*). Do not capitalize when used as a generic term.

life span

life-threatening, life threatening

This word is hyphenated as an adjective, as in a *life-threatening illness*. It is not hyphenated when used as a noun: *The illness may be life threatening*.

lifestyle

Listserv

log in, log on, log off vs. login, logon, logoff

Two words, no hyphen when a verb: *She sat down to log in to her computer*. One word, no hyphen when used as a noun or adjective: *She typed in her login name. His logon was still active*.

M

Match Day

Held the third Friday of March, Match Day is a term used widely to represent the day when the National Resident Matching Program releases results to applicants seeking residency and fellowship training positions in the United States.

MRI

MRI is acceptable on first reference for magnetic resonance imaging, a type of diagnostic scan.

managed care, managed-care

Two words as a noun: *Many employers choose managed care*. Hyphenated as a compound modifier: *A managed-care option*. Note: Differs from day care, health care and intensive care.

managed-care organization (MCO)

An insurance company or other organization that markets managed-care plans.

manikin

Correct spelling for medical figure (not mannequin).

Master of Science

See [academic degrees and credentials](#).

matriculate

Means to enroll, not to graduate. Use this term sparingly in external communications since many readers outside academia may not be familiar with the term.

media

The plural form takes a plural verb: *The mass media were publicizing the incident*.

medications

See [drugs and medications](#).

monetary units

Spell out the word “cents” in lowercase and use numerals for amounts less than a dollar.

Use the \$ sign and numerals for larger amounts, except in casual references: *The book cost \$4. I have \$3.05. Dad, give me a dollar*.

For amounts exceeding \$1 million, use the \$ sign and numerals up to two decimal places: *It is worth \$4.45 million. A \$2 million NIH grant*.

months

See [dates](#).

mosquito, mosquitos

No “e” in the plural; note this is a departure from AP Style.

multimillion

no hyphen

multiple sclerosis (MS)**muscular dystrophy (MD)**

A certain type of MD is Duchenne muscular dystrophy (not Duchenne’s)

N**names (works)**

See [book and magazine titles](#).

names (people)

Always use a person’s first and last name the first time they are mentioned. Use only last names on second reference.

When someone uses two initials as a name, there should be no space between them, but do use periods (*C.J. Cregg*).

Do not use courtesy titles such as Mr., Mrs., Miss or Ms., unless they are part of a direct quotation or are needed to differentiate between people who have the same last name.

Do not use “Dr.” in front of a name unless quoting someone. *“Dr. Sheppard is an excellent candidate for this award,” said Meredith Grey, MD.*

names (scientific)

In scientific or biological names, capitalize the first or generic Latin name for the class of plant or animal and lowercase the species that follows (*Staphylococcus aureus*).

In second references, use the abbreviated form: *S. aureus*. (In this case, staph is also an acceptable abbreviation.)

Note this is a departure from AP Style.

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Note the plural form of institutes. There are 19 institutes within the NIH.

nauseated, nauseous

A person is nauseated, not nauseous. Nauseous means causing nausea.

needlestick

One word

neonatal intensive care unit (NICU)**non-formula**

Hyphenate when used as an adjective

noninvasive

One word, no hyphen

nonresident

One word, no hyphen

numbers

In general, spell out one through nine. Use figures (also called numerals) for 10 or above and whenever preceding a percentage, address, time, monetary unit or unit of measure (such as distance, dimensions, weights or speeds) or referring to ages. Do so even if it means items in a list or sequence will be done differently. (*They had 10 dogs, six cats and 97 hamsters.*) Numerals can also be used in all tabular matter and in statistical and sequential forms (*Page 1; magnitude 6 earthquake; Rooms 3 and 4; Chapter 2; line 1 but first line*).

Always spell out numbers that begin a sentence, except for years. Also spell out numbers in indefinite, fanciful, and casual uses, or in a proper name. If two numbers appear next to each other, spell out the first one and use a number for the second one (*forty-two 5-digit codes*).

Use numerals with million or billion except in casual uses: *I’d like one million flowers; he gave \$1 million to the school.*

In large figures: Use a comma for most figures greater than 999. The major exceptions are street addresses, broadcast frequencies (*1460 kilohertz*), room numbers, serial numbers, telephone numbers and years.

See also:

[addresses](#)

[ages](#)

[decimals](#)

[fractions](#)

[monetary units](#)

[page numbers](#)

[percent](#)

[time](#)

[units of measurement](#)

[weight](#)

nurse practitioner (NP)

As a credential following name: NP.

See also [academic degrees and credentials](#).

O**OB-GYN**

The preferred reference for obstetrics/obstetrician and gynecology/gynecologist; capitalized, with hyphen, not a slash.

obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)

Do not use OCD as an adjective for someone who obsesses over certain things but has not been formally diagnosed.

off campus, off-campus

Two words when it follows the noun it modifies: *The event was held off campus.* Hyphenated when it precedes the noun it modifies: *The group decided to hold an off-campus event.*

offline

OK, OK'd, OK'ing, OKs

on-call, on call

Hyphenated as adjective; two words as adverb: *The on-call nurse is not on call today*

on-site

Hyphenate as noun or adjective

online

One word, no hyphen

open-heart surgery

orthopedic

AP medical stories favor orthopedic, except when orthopaedic is used in a proper name.

outpatient

One word, no hyphen

P

p.m.

Lowercase. Insert one space between numeral and “p.m.” Use “noon” instead of 12 p.m. Avoid repetition of “p.m.” *The meeting will be held from 2 to 4 p.m.* Artistic license regarding whether to include the periods may be taken in materials like invitations for reasons of space or design.

page numbers

Spell out and capitalize “Page” when used with a page number: *See related story Page 3.* Always use numerals.

Pap test

Uppercase (named after George Papanicolaou); Pap smear is also an acceptable, interchangeable term.

parentheses

Avoid parentheses when possible, and instead rewrite text or use dashes or commas to set off the information. If parentheses are required, place the period inside the

parentheses when the parenthetical is a complete, independent sentence; if it is not, the period goes outside the parentheses.

part time, part-time

Two words as adverb, hyphenated as adjective: *She works part time at her part-time job.*

patients

To refer to people served by Coastal Bend Health Education Center programs, use “participants,” not “patients.”

patient- and family-centered care

payer

Not payor

percentages

Spell out “percent” as one word; avoid the use of the % symbol except in charts or in web or marketing usages where space is at a premium: *NIH research funding grew by more than 13 percent last year.* “Percent” takes a singular verb when standing alone or when a singular word follows an “of” construction: *The professor said 60 percent was a failing grade.* It takes a plural verb when a plural word follows an “of” construction: *He said 50 percent of the members were there.*

All numbers, even those less than 10, are numerals when used with the word percent: *The increase was more than 5 percent.* Use the word “percent” with every citation of a percentage: *40 percent to 50 percent, not 40-50 percent.*

For amounts less than 1 percent, precede the decimal with a zero: *The cost of living rose 0.6 percent.*

PhD

No periods

phase I, phase II, phase III trial

phone numbers

See [telephone numbers](#).

photo captions

A photo credit should not end with a period. Employ parallelism when mentioning a number of people and their titles in a caption. Such terms as top, bottom, left, right, above, below, from left, or clockwise from left usually precede the phrase identifying the object or person.

Use commas, not colons. With a group of people, begin with from left. With two people, the person on the left is generally indicated: *Bill Jones, left, and Bob Smith*, unless clear: *Bill Jones and Mary Smith*. Use “a” NOT “the” when the same award (or title or other terms) is given to multiple people. (*Jane Smith, MS, receives a Business Communicator Award.*) Don't use quotation

marks when mentioning the name of the award. (*John Smith, MD, received the 2010 Continuing Educator of the Year Award.*)

physician assistant (PA)

Not physician's assistant. As credential following name: "PA;" certified PA title is "PA-C."

physician vs. doctor

Use "physician" in most cases, as "doctor" is the more general term and can refer to anyone with an advanced degree. Marketing copy and headlines may use "doctor."

positive emission tomography (PET) scan

possessive form

See [apostrophes](#).

post-mortem

Means after death; hyphenated

post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

postdoctoral

Study beyond the MD or PhD degree. One word, no hyphen. Except when quoting someone, use the more formal "postdoctoral fellow" rather than "postdoc."

postgraduate

Study after earning a first degree in an area; one word, no hyphen

postoperative

After an operation; one word, no hyphen

preeminent

One word; no hyphen

preferred provider organization (PPO)

No hyphen

preeclampsia

No hyphen

prefixes

As a general rule, do not use hyphens with well-known prefixes such as anti-, bi-, multi-, non-, post-, pre-, pro- and uni-, or if the base word starts with a consonant (*antihistamine, multidisciplinary, nonprofit, predoctoral, postoperative, postgraduate*).

If the prefix ends in a vowel and the word that follows begins with the same vowel, a hyphen is required (*anti-inflammatory*). Exceptions: cooperate, coordinate, preeclampsia, preeminent.

Also use a hyphen when the addition of a prefix results in two conjoined vowels or repeated letters that impede readability (*bio-adhesive, pre-registration*).

Use a hyphen if the base word is capitalized (*non-English-speaking*).

When using the prefix co-, include the hyphen when the word describes occupation or status, or when the hyphen is needed for readability (*co-author, co-chair*).

When using the prefix self-, always use a hyphen (*self-care, self-evident*). See also [hyphens](#).

premedical, premed

premenstrual

One word, no hyphen

prenatal

One word, no hyphen

preoperative

One word, no hyphen

preventive

Not preventative (*Healthy South Texas promotes preventive care at the community level.*)

principal investigator

professor

Capitalize a formal title when it comes before a name (*Dean John Jones; Professor of Biology James Smith*). Lowercase a formal title after a name (*James Smith, a professor of biology*).

One exception: Capitalize a named professorship both before and after a name (*Distinguished University Professor of Biology James Smith; James Smith, Distinguished University Professor of Biology*).

program

Capitalize only when used in formal name (*Employee Benefits Program*). Subsequent references would be to "the program."

promotora

Put in quotation marks on first reference and explain the role: A lay Hispanic/Latino community member who receives specialized training to provide basic health education in the community. Do not italicize.

punctuation and type face

Immediately following boldface, italics etc., punctuation takes boldface, italics etc. (*Who said that? I don't know!*)

Q

quotation marks

Closing quotation marks follow commas and periods ending the statement being quoted (“*Tuberculosis is devastating,*” he said.) In other words, commas and periods should be inside quotation marks in every use.

Dashes, colons, semicolons, question marks and exclamation points should be inside the quotation marks when they apply to the quoted matter only: “*To be or not to be?*” They go outside when they apply to the whole sentence: *Do you know how to spell “Guillain-Barré syndrome”? The registrar declared that “students must register first”; additional regulations are listed below.*

For a quote within a quote, bookend the internal quotation within single quotation marks (‘ ’): “*I always pass on the left because, as my father used to say, ‘You shouldn’t get careless on a highway.’*” Otherwise, use double quotation marks in the body of the text.

If a quote extends through more than one paragraph, place quotation marks at the beginning of each paragraph and closing quotation marks at the end of the last paragraph. Close quotes at the end of intervening paragraphs are not necessary.

When quoting someone who has already been identified (where no attribution after the quote is necessary), use “*Smith said*” not “*said Smith.*” If additional credentials or attribution are needed, then the order “*said Smith, who is also the head of the department*” is acceptable.

R

Regents Professor Awards program

Award recipients carry the title “Regents Professor,” which is capitalized even if placed after their name. *Dan Jones, Regents Professor, has made many important scientific breakthroughs.*

registered nurse (RN)

As credential following name: *RN*
See [academic degrees and credentials](#).

residency

A period of at least one year, and often three or four years, of on-the-job training that is part of the formal educational program for health professionals.

resident

Residents are physicians or surgeons who continue their clinical training for one to four years within a medical or surgical specialty in a clinical department after graduation

from medical school. Residents care for patients under the direction and responsibility of attending physicians (faculty).

room numbers

Capitalize when used with a number: *The seminar will take place in Medical Research and Education Building Room 351.*

S

scheduled drugs

Schedule II, Schedule III drugs

seasons

Do not capitalize names of names of seasons, semesters or academic periods. ([Spring Break](#) is an exception.)

semicolons

Use in a sentence to separate two complete and related thoughts: *Jane Smith went to New York; it was her first visit there.* A semicolon is also used to clarify a series: *The team was made up of Sam Jones, who has been with the hospital many years; and Dennis Johnson, who just transferred from New York last month.*

Use to separate names in photo captions: *John Jones, MD, PhD; Jane Johnson, MD, JD; Jane Doe, PA-C; John Doe, MSN.*

sentence spacing

Put only a single space after a period at the end of a sentence.

SHIFT Case Competition

The SHIFT Case Competition serves as practice-based learning activity that provides participants with an opportunity to enhance competency as well as explore novel approaches to delivering care to underserved populations.

smartphone

Lowercase, one word

social distancing, physical distancing

Physical distancing (no quote marks, no hyphen) is preferred to describe measures that limit physical contact between people to prevent disease spread. *Texas A&M is taking physical distancing precautions. Students, faculty and staff have been physically distancing themselves.*

Spring Break

Capitalize

stages of cancer

Stages progress from 1 through 4. Write with “stage” lowercased (*stage 3 cancer*).

startup, start up

One word as noun, used to describe a new business venture (*startup*): She worked for a startup. Two words as verb (*start up*): They left to start up a new company.

state names

Spell out state names in the body of a story, whether used alone or in conjunction with a city or town: *The Golden Gate Bridge is in San Francisco, California.*

Use two-letter postal codes (*NC, OH, FL*) only when a full address is being used as a mailing address.

In sentence usage, spell out the name of the city and state rather than abbreviate.

Do not capitalize the word “state.” *The state of Texas is the second-most populous after the state of California.*

Use a comma after names of states and nations used with city names: *His journey will take him from College Station, Texas, to Fargo, North Dakota, and back.*

student year designations

Internally, it is acceptable to refer to third-year medical students as “M3,” first year pharmacy students as “P1,” etc., but externally, it is preferred to spell out: *third-year medical student, first-year pharmacy student.*

When using the “class of...” designation, lowercase generically but uppercase when used with a specific school. (*The School of Medicine just welcomed the class of 2026 to the Bryan-College Station campus. Jane Smith is a member of the Texas A&M School of Medicine Class of '04.*)

suffixes

In general, do not hyphenate compounds with common suffixes such as -less, -long, -out, -over, -wide, -wise (*clueless, yearlong, departmentwide, clockwise*). Similarly, do not hyphenate most constructions using -up (*cleanup, makeup, startup*), but there are exceptions (follow-up, grown-up, close-up, shake-up).

Hyphenate when using -in (*break-in*).

T

team

Use singular verb and pronoun “it” when referring to the team as a collective unit: *The research team published its findings in the journal.* However, the team name takes a plural verb and pronoun: *The Aggies Invent Research Team published their findings in the journal.*

telehealth, telemedicine

One word, no hyphen

telephone numbers

Use dots between parts of the phone number (*979.555.0000*). Note that this is a departure from AP Style.

temperature

Don't use the word “temperature” when “fever” is meant (as all people technically have a temperature). Use figures, except zero: *He had a fever of 100 degrees.*

Texas

When using in a possessive form: Texas' with no extra “s” at the end.

three-dimensional

It's 3-D, with hyphen, in all uses.

time

Use figures for time of day except for noon and midnight. Also designate with a.m. or p.m.—with periods—and do not use :00 (*11 a.m.; 3:30 p.m.; 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; 8 hours, 30 minutes, 20 seconds*). See also a.m. and p.m.

Spell out numbers less than 10 standing alone and in modifiers (*I'll be there in five minutes. He scored with two seconds left. He works an eight-hour day.*)

Avoid such redundancies as 10 a.m. this morning. An acceptable abbreviation for all day, every day is 24/7.

time zones

When stating an embargo time on a press release, label it either CST or CDT accordingly. In other words, always use the local time zone and remember to note whether or not it is daylight saving time. *The embargo lifts at noon CDT on May 1.*

timeout

One word (Note that this follows AP style but is an exception to the dictionary).

titles (articles)

Use quotation marks for titles of articles or similar short works. See [book and magazine titles](#).

titles (books and journals)

Use italics for titles of books, journals, pamphlets, periodicals and newspapers, movies, television shows, poems, plays, paintings and long musical compositions. Note that this is a departure from AP Style.

titles (military)

On first reference, use the appropriate, capitalized title before the full name of a member of the military. See [Appendix 4](#) to determine whether the title should be spelled out or abbreviated. In subsequent references, do not continue using

the title before a name.

Each service has ratings such as machinist, radarman, torpedoman, etc. that are job descriptions. Do not use any of these designations as a title on first reference. If one is used before a name in a subsequent reference, do not capitalize or abbreviate it.

To make plural, add “s” to the principal element in the title: *Majs. John Jones and Robert Smith; Maj. Gens. John Jones and Robert Smith; Spcs. John Jones and Robert Smith*. A military rank may be used in first reference before the name of an officer who has retired if it is relevant to a story. Do not, however, use the military abbreviation “Ret.”: *They invited retired Army Gen. John Smith*.

titles (people)

Capitalize a title before a name: *School of Medicine Dean Jane Doe*; use lowercase and set off with commas after a name: *Jane Doe, MD, dean of the School of Medicine*. See also [names \(people\)](#).

touch screen, touch-screen

Two words as noun (*touch screen*); hyphenated as adjective (*touch-screen*)

Tourette syndrome

Avoid the acronym TS as it is not widely known.

trademarks and symbols

In general, use a generic equivalent unless the trademark name is essential to the story (*tissues* instead of *Kleenex*, etc.) If applicable to piece, for first mention, use the trademark name with the appropriate symbol. On second and subsequent references, no symbol is necessary.

trauma centers

Uppercase the levels and use Roman numerals (*The center is designated as Level I; she went to the Level II trauma center*)

type 1 diabetes, type 2 diabetes

See [diabetes](#).

U

U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

Adjective after the first reference is “FDA-approved.”

undertreated

underway

One word in all uses

unfriend

Lowercase, one word

United States (U.S.)

Use “United States” (noun) or “U.S.” (adjective), as appropriate. Use periods in the abbreviation “U.S.” within texts. In headlines and marketing copy, it’s U.S.

units of measurement

Spell out “inch,” “pound,” “foot,” etc. Follow Webster for metric abbreviations: *cm*, *mm*, *ml*, but spell out for clarity on first reference: *7 centimeters (cm)*.

Note also that numbers in units of measure are generally not spelled out, even when nine and under: *4 pounds, 6 ounces*. Plurals of abbreviated units do not require an “s.”

Unless otherwise noted, insert a space between the number and the unit of measurement. The exception is in units of temperature, in which there is no space (*30°C or 80°F*).

URL

Although it is not wrong to include the phrases *http://* and *www* when giving URLs, it is usually not necessary to do so. Use the shortest version of a specific URL that still gets you to where you are going (*tamhsc.edu*). Also, provide hyperlinks directly on the referenced phrase or word; do not use extra words like, “Click Here.”

username

V

VA

See [Department of Veterans Affairs](#).

vitamins

Lowercase: *vitamin C, vitamin D-3, vitamin B complex*

W

website

weight

Use figures; see also [units of measurement](#) for further information and examples.

well-being

work-study

work-up

X

X-ray

Uppercase X; hyphenated

Y

years

In most cases, use the full four digits. Occasionally, only the last two digits is preferred.

Do **not** use an apostrophe to indicate spans of decades or centuries (*1980s*, *the 1900s*).

See also [centuries](#).

YouTube

Z

ZIP code

Capitalize ZIP (Zone Improvement Program); lowercase “code.”

PART 3

APPENDICES

[Commonly Misused Words](#)

[Extra Help for Commas](#)

[Extra Help for Word Choice](#)

[Military Titles](#)

COMMONLY MISUSED WORDS

affect vs. effect

Affect, as a verb, means to influence: *The game will affect the standings.* **Affect**, as a noun, should be used only in formal psychology and neuroscience contexts, where it means demeanor: *The patient had a flat affect.* **Effect**, as a verb, means to cause: *He will effect many changes in the department.* **Effect**, as a noun, means result: *The effect was overwhelming.*

after vs. afterward

Don't use the preposition **after** when you really mean the adverb **afterward**. *We met for dinner and went out for drinks afterward.*

already vs. all ready

Already is beforehand: *Already the procedure was running long before they found the problem.* **All ready** is 100 percent ready: *He was all ready to begin the surgery.*

although vs. while

Do not use the word **while** when you really mean **although**. **While** implies a time element: *While the breast cancer mortality rates were going down, overall incidence was rising.* **Although** should be the preferred word when contrasting something: *Although the breast cancer mortality rates have been going down, there is still much work to be done.*

among vs. between

When there are more than two people or things involved, use **among**—not **between**: *Among red, white and blue, more people prefer blue.*

assure vs. ensure or insure

All of these have the general meaning of the root “to make sure,” but their use is somewhat different. **Assure** is to promise or say with confidence. It is more about saying than doing:

I assure you that you'll be warm enough. **Ensure** is to do or have what is necessary for success, to make sure something will happen, or to confirm that this is the case: *These blankets ensure that you'll be warm enough.* **Insure** is to cover with an insurance policy. *I will insure my home with additional fire and flood policies.*

centered on vs. centered around

Use **centered on**; not **centered around**:
His life centered on his work.

compare to vs. compare with

Compare to means to liken one thing to something similar: *She compared the heart to sophisticated pump.* **Compare with** means to look at similarities and differences: *The study compared the defibrillators made by Acme with those made by Nadir.*

compose vs. comprise or constitute

Compose means to create or put together: *The zoo is composed of many animals. Texas A&M Health is composed of colleges of dentistry, medicine, nursing, pharmacy and public health.* **Comprise** means to contain, to include all or embrace. It is best used only in the active voice, followed by a direct object: *The zoo comprises many animals. Texas A&M Health comprises five schools.* **Constitute**, in the sense of form or make up, may be the best word if neither compose nor comprise seems to fit: *A collection of animals can constitute a zoo. Five schools constitute Texas A&M Health.*

continual vs. continuous

Continual means repeating steadily at intervals: *He was troubled for days by continual coughing.* **Continuous** means uninterrupted:
The healthy heart beats in a continuous rhythm.

dilatation vs. dilation

Dilatation means the condition of being stretched: *The MRI showed extensive dilatation of the vessel.* **Dilation** means the process of stretching: *The catheter expedited dilation of the right coronary artery during the procedure.*

disc vs. disk

Use **disc** when referring to an optical storage medium, such as a compact disc or videodisc, or to part of a vertebra. Use **disk** when referring to a magnetic storage medium, such as a computer disk.

every day vs. everyday

The phrase **every day** is adverbial: *She taught the biochemistry class every day.* The word **everyday** is an adjective, and means ordinary or used routinely: *He wore his everyday shoes to the conference.*

fewer vs. less

Use **fewer** for individual items, **less** for bulk or quantity: *Fewer than 10 applicants called. He had less than \$50 in his pocket. She had fewer than 10 one-dollar bills in her pocket.*

home vs. hone

Home (as a verb) means to go or return home, or to proceed or direct attention toward an objective: *Scientists are homing in on an understanding of the workings of stem cells.* **Hone** means to sharpen, or to make more intense or effective: *The department chair had spent many years honing her public speaking skills.*

if vs. whether

If means “in the event that” or “on the condition that”: *If the preliminary results hold up over time, the research will be a success.* **Whether** means an indirect question involving alternatives: *The investigator asked whether the results were valid.* Note that the phrase “or not” is not needed after the word “whether”: *They’re trying to decide whether to go to the store.*

inter vs. intra

Inter is a prefix that means between; **intra** is a prefix that means within. *The internet is a web of connections between many computers; an intranet is a network within one organization.*

interdisciplinary vs. interprofessional vs. multidisciplinary

Although often used interchangeably, technically interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary have slightly different meanings. An **interdisciplinary** team may be understood to be a group of professionals from several disciplines working interdependently in the same setting, interacting both formally and informally. A **multidisciplinary** team is composed of members from more than one discipline who work independently and interact formally. Multidisciplinary teams may be thought of as requiring everyone to “do his or her own thing” with little or no awareness of other disciplines’ work.

Use **interdisciplinary** for students, unless used to discuss an official interprofessional education (IPE) program between the schools, and **interprofessional** for faculty or staff (or anyone else in the workforce).

lead vs. led

Lead is present tense. **Led** is past tense. *You lead a discussion. Yesterday, you led the discussion.*

like vs. such as

If the list or example that follows includes the item that starts it, use **such as**: *Corporation X hasn’t had a problem working with vendors such as Sheet Metal Buildings R Us.*

If there is a strict comparison or metaphor, use **like**: *Corporation X may have a problem if it ever decides to hire an outside vendor like Lowe’s because its in-house crew objects.*

perspective vs. prospective

Perspective is always a noun and means a point of view. **Prospective** is always an adjective and means expected and is used to mean something that is likely to happen in the future.

premier vs. premiere

Premier is usually an adjective that means first in order or importance. **Premiere** is usually a noun or a verb meaning the initial showing or performance of a play, film, ballet or similar.

says vs. said

Generally, when quoting someone, use the past tense **said** versus the present tense **says**.

stationary vs. stationery

Stationary means “fixed in one place” like a stationary bicycle. **Stationery** refers to materials used in writing, such as paper or envelopes.

that vs. which

Use “that” and “which” in referring to inanimate objects and to animals without a name. The difference between these words has to do with essential vs. non-essential clauses. If you can drop the clause and not lose the meaning of the sentence, use **which**; otherwise, use **that**. In other words: Use **that** for essential clauses, important to the meaning of a sentence, and without commas: *I remember the day that we met.* Use **which** for nonessential clauses, where the pronoun is less necessary, and use commas: *I remember the day that we met your friends for coffee, which was delicious.*

vice vs. vise

A **vice** is a moral fault or failing, or used in official titles, such as “vice dean”. A **vise** is a tool with two jaws that close.

who vs. whom

Who is the pronoun used for references to human beings and to animals with a name. It is grammatically the subject (never the object) of a sentence, clause or phrase: *The woman who rented the room left the window open. Who is there? Whom* is used when someone is the object of a verb or preposition: *The woman to whom the room was rented left the window open. Whom do you wish to see?*

who/whom vs. which

Use **who** for people and for animals with a name. Use **which** for all other cases.

EXTRA HELP FOR COMMAS

DO NOT USE COMMAS

- In a list of three or more items, do not use the comma (called serial comma or Oxford comma) before the word “and” or “or,” unless needed for clarity: *red, white and blue*
- When the subject of the two clauses is the same and is not repeated in the second: *She is working on new research and hopes to publish soon.*
- Before “because” (unless you need the comma to prevent confusion because your sentence could have two meanings)
 - *The Okies had to leave their farms because the drought conditions had ruined their farms.*
 - *I knew that President Nixon would resign that morning, because my sister-in-law worked in the White House.* (Without that comma, the sentence says that Nixon’s resignation was the fault of my sister-in-law.)
- Before “such as” or “including” when a sentence wouldn’t make sense without the words that follow: *I love moments such as those.*
- At the start of an indirect or partial quotation: *She said the vaccine will be ready in the next year or two.*
- In names of people with Jr. and Sr.: *John Smith Jr.*

DO USE COMMAS

- Before the word “and” or “or” in a list of three or more items when there is a compound list of things and the last part includes the word “and”: *The colors in the image were purple, orange, green, and white and gray mix.*
- In direct address: *Sarah, please turn on the fume hood.*
- To separate a series of adjectives equal in rank: If the commas could be replaced by the word and without changing the sense, the adjectives are equal: *a thoughtful, precise manner* or *a dark, dangerous street*
- To separate duplicated words that otherwise would be confusing: *What the problem is, is not clear.*
- To set off someone’s age: *Maude Findlay, 48, was present.*
- With “yes” and “no”: *Yes, I will be there.*
- With full dates: When a phrase refers to a month, day and year, set off the year with a comma: *November 5, 2016, is my thirtieth birthday.*
- With introductory clauses and phrases: *When he had tired of the mad pace of New York, he moved to Dubuque.* (No comma needed when phrase is fewer than four words: *Outside you’ll find the equipment.*)
- Before coordinating conjunctions (FANBOYS: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) that join two independent clauses that could stand apart as separate sentences: *She was glad she had looked, for a man was approaching the house.*
- After names of states and nations used with city names: *His journey will take him from College Station, Texas, to Fargo, North Dakota, and back.*
- For any number containing four or more digits: *4,000* or *10,000*
- To set off credentials: *Jane Doe, PhD, is a new professor.*

EXTRA HELP FOR WORD CHOICE

- Write clearly.
- Use minimal jargon.
- Avoid redundancy: It is redundant to say “10 a.m. Thursday morning.” Instead: *The surgery begins at 10 a.m. Thursday.*
- Generally speaking, use active voice. The active voice makes prose sharper and more engaging. The subject of a sentence using the active voice performs an action. In the passive voice, the person doing the acting is the object instead of the subject of the sentence. Active voice: *Now you can manage your health care online with new, user-friendly tools.* Passive Voice: *Health care can now be managed by you online with new, user-friendly tools.*
- Gender neutrality is encouraged in all communications, but avoid using he/she and him/her constructions, which are clumsy, and “one” constructions (*One must always be aware of one’s conduct*), which sound too stiff. Use articles, whenever possible, over gender-specific pronouns. Original: *The nurse manages charts for her group.* Better alternative: *The nurse manages charts for the group.* It might also be possible to go from a specific, singular construction to a general, plural construction: *Nurses manage charts for their groups.*
- When talking about people with a disease, condition or disability, always use “people-first” language. Original: *The people on the panel were an addict, a diabetic and quadriplegic.* Better alternative: *The people on the panel were a person in recovery, someone with diabetes and someone with a physical disability.* Original: *She’s autistic, and he’s wheelchair bound.* Better alternative: *She has been diagnosed with autism, and he uses a wheelchair.* Also, don’t mention their condition unless relevant to the story and if a licensed medical professional has formally diagnosed the person.
- Terms like “afflicted with,” “stricken with,” “suffers from” and “victim of” carry the assumption that a person with a disability is suffering or has a reduced quality of life. It is preferable to use neutral language when describing a person who has a disability, simply stating the facts about the nature of the disability. For example, it’s not, *“Brown suffers from epilepsy,”* but say instead, *“Brown has been diagnosed with epilepsy”* or simply *“has epilepsy.”*
- Do not use “as well as” when there is already an “and” or an “also” in the sentence.
- Use “include” or “including” to introduce a series when the items that follow are only part of the total. You don’t need to end a sentence like this with “among others” or “and more” or “etc.” because using “include” implies that you’re not providing a complete list. *The hospital departments include cardiology and neurology.* (Of course, the hospital has many more departments that focus on other specialties.)
- Watch your subject-verb agreement, and remember that “the company,” “the board of directors” and “the council” are all “it.” *The Board of Directors voted against a fee increase, saying it did not want to burden people.* Too often, we want to turn bodies or agencies into “they.”
- “Apparently,” “potentially,” “possibly” and any other qualifying words should be avoided when possible; always try for specific and concrete. On the other hand, things are rarely the “first” or “only,” so if you’re going to use these words, make sure they’re accurate. Use the proper background material to eliminate so-called qualifiers.
- Terms like “older adults” or “older people” are preferred over elderly, seniors or senior citizens as a general description when relevant.

MILITARY TITLES

The following are a list of abbreviations of military titles, in the order of highest rank to lowest, that should be used before the full name of a member of the military. For informal purposes, including press releases, social media and similar uses, the abbreviation should be used. For more formal purposes, such as invitations and letters of memorandum, the full title should be used.

Commissioned Officers			
Army, Air Force and Marine Corps		Navy and Coast Guard	
general	Gen.	admiral	Adm.
lieutenant general	Lt. Gen.	vice admiral	Vice Adm.
major general	Maj. Gen.	rear admiral upper half	Rear Adm.
brigadier general	Brig. Gen.	rear admiral lower half	Rear Adm.
colonel	Col.	captain	Capt.
lieutenant colonel	Lt. Col.	commander	Cmdr.
major	Maj.	lieutenant commander	Lt. Cmdr.
captain	Capt.	lieutenant	Lt.
first lieutenant	1st Lt.	lieutenant junior grade	Lt. j.g.
second lieutenant	2nd Lt.	ensign	Ensign

Warrant Officers			
Army		Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard	
chief warrant officer five	Chief Warrant Officer 5	chief warrant officer	Chief Warrant Officer
chief warrant officer four	Chief Warrant Officer 4		
chief warrant officer three	Chief Warrant Officer 3		
chief warrant officer two	Chief Warrant Officer 2		
warrant officer	Warrant Officer		

MILITARY TITLES

Enlisted Personnel							
Army		Marine Corps		Navy & Coast Guard		Air Force	
sergeant major of the Army	Sgt. Maj. of the Army	sergeant major of the Marine Corps	Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps	master chief petty officer of the Navy	Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy	chief master sergeant of the Air Force	Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force
command sergeant major	Command Sgt. Maj.	sergeant major	Sgt. Maj.	command master chief petty officer	Command Master Chief Petty Officer	command chief master sergeant	Command Chief Master Sgt.
sergeant major	Sgt. Maj.	master gunnery sergeant	Master Gunnery Sgt.	master chief petty officer	Master Chief Petty Officer	chief master sergeant	Chief Master Sgt.
first sergeant	1st Sgt.	first sergeant	1st Sgt.	senior chief petty officer	Senior Chief Petty Officer	senior master sergeant	Senior Master Sgt.
master sergeant	Master Sgt.	master sergeant	Master Sgt.				
sergeant first class	Sgt. 1st Class	gunnery sergeant	Gunnery Sgt.	chief petty officer	Chief Petty Officer	master sergeant	Master Sgt.
staff sergeant	Staff Sgt.	staff sergeant	Staff Sgt.	petty officer first class	Petty Officer 1st Class	technical sergeant	Tech. Sgt.
sergeant	Sgt.	sergeant	Sgt.	petty officer second class	Petty Officer 2nd Class	staff sergeant	Staff Sgt.
corporal	Cpl.	corporal	Cpl.	petty officer third class	Petty Officer 3rd Class	senior airman	Senior Airman
specialist	Spc.						
private first class	Pfc.	lance corporal	Lance Cpl.	seaman	Seaman	airman first class	Airman 1st Class
private	Pvt.	private first class	Pfc.	seaman apprentice	Seaman Apprentice	airman	Airman
		private	Pvt.	seaman recruit	Seaman Recruit	airman basic	Airman