

 **Columbia Law School**

Editorial Style Guide





Contents

- 1** Introduction: Speaking in One Voice
- 6** Abbreviations, Academic Degrees, and Acronyms
- 8** Alumni Designations
- 9** Capitalization
(see also: Columbia Law Titles and Names)
- 10** Columbia Law Titles and Names
(Programs, Faculty, Publications, and Others)
- 15** Language and Spelling Preferences
- 18** Legal Language
- 19** Numerals
- 21** Publication Specifics
(Captions, Titles, and Pull quotes)
- 23** Punctuation



Introduction

SPEAKING IN ONE VOICE

This editorial style manual is intended to answer many writing questions that come up at the Law School and to help everyone use a clear and consistent voice in official communications. Unless otherwise specified, the guidelines below apply to digital and print content.

Law School communications should be useful, informative, and accessible. Whether it is an announcement, memo, newsletter, course description, faculty bio, event listing, or brochure, the writing needs to be clear, concise, and free of jargon, and in many cases with the most important points first. Typically, this kind of writing—unlike scholarly or legal writing—is intended to be engaging, and often to inspire action from busy readers—donations, applications, RSVPs, or visits to our website.

Our editorial style rules are based largely on *The Associated Press Stylebook*, with some notable exceptions. (The exceptions are detailed in this guide.) For issues not addressed here, please refer to *AP Style* and *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th Edition*.

One Voice and Many Tones

Columbia Law School aims to speak with a distinct **voice**. Our voice is our *personality*. It conveys what is unique about the institution, our style, and point of view. It is recognizable and consistent. When we speak in one voice, across platforms, we give readers a clear view of and feeling about the Law School.

In our communications, the Law School works to reinforce the values that are core to our identity:

Excellence: Columbia Law has a long tradition of achievement.

Innovation: From the curriculum and programs to faculty scholarship, Columbia Law is on the cutting edge.

Community: Warm, inclusive, collaborative, and welcoming to all.

Impact: Our work influences public discourse and policy.

Here are some guiding tenets of the Law School's voice:

Confident not cocky

Expert not stodgy

Smart not condescending

Clever not cute

Clear not simplistic

Compelling not complicated

EXAMPLES:

Before (stodgy, complicated)

"The sense of community at Columbia is quite different from other neighborhoods in New York City; it is more spacious, less crowded, more collegiate, more reflective, and less hectic."

"For more than a century, Columbia Law School has educated students who, having already earned a basic law degree, wish to pursue an advanced course of full-time study in furtherance of careers in teaching, public service, or the international practice of law."

After (confident, smart, authoritative)

"Columbia's campus has the vibrancy and intimacy of a college town within one of the world's greatest financial, legal, cultural, and culinary capitals."

"For more than a century, Columbia Law has trained legal professionals from around the world to become leaders in academia, public service, and international practice."

Use Active Voice

A good way to engage readers is to use active, rather than passive voice. Active voice enlivens writing, running in a straight line from the actor to the action in a sentence.

EXAMPLES:

Passive Voice	Active Voice
<i>The forms were received on Tuesday by Pat Smith.</i>	<i>Pat Smith received the forms on Tuesday.</i>
<i>The judge's decision has been interpreted by legal scholars in several ways.</i>	<i>Legal scholars have interpreted the judge's decision in several ways.</i>

Avoid Jargon. Use Plain English.

It can be difficult, when you know an institution or subject well, to avoid using “inside baseball” language. Readers often respond best to straightforward words that they easily understand.

It is acceptable to use “we,” “us,” and “our” in brochures and communications specifically aimed at students or prospective students and members of the Law School community, including alumni.

Avoid stuffy or overly formal words or phrases, such as: forthwith, commence, in the event of, particulars, and per anum.

Avoid Overwriting

Research has shown that the average email is read in 10 to 15 seconds, and the average person spends 15 seconds on a web page. Therefore, it is imperative to get right to the point.

The ideal sentence length is considered to be 15 to 20 words, with 85 percent of the words one or two syllables long.

Limit Overused Adjectives

We're proud that the Law School is *innovative, preeminent, unique, prestigious, extraordinary, leading, rigorous, and diverse*. However, these words lose their meanings when they are overused. Use sparingly.

Show, Don't Tell

This journalistic mantra holds true for our materials. Let the Law School shine through stories and actions.

EXAMPLE

Telling

Suzanne Goldberg, one of our preeminent faculty members, is a renowned scholar of gender and sexuality law.

Showing

Gender and sexuality law expert Suzanne Goldberg served as co-counsel in two cases that became cornerstone gay rights victories at the U.S. Supreme Court.

Avoid Redundancy

The crossed-out words in the following examples don't add anything and can be eliminated.

They were ~~both~~ alike

A ~~total~~ of 68 participants [except at the start of a sentence]

Had been ~~previously~~ found

Small ~~in size~~

Period ~~of time~~

Between ~~the dates of~~ June 15 and 16 (or ~~the months of~~ June and July)

She is ~~currently~~ a first-year law student.

With offices ~~located~~ in New York City

She interviewed with 30 ~~different~~ organizations

Avoid Excess

Writers can usually replace long phrases such as these with single words.

despite the fact that = although

with regard to = about

in the event that = if

has the opportunity to = can

due to the fact that = because

Says, Not Said

When quoting an individual, use “says” for a brochure and similar communications where the date of the speech isn’t relevant. This construction contributes to a fresh, timeless feeling.

Use “said” for announcements, events coverage, and other quotes where the date is relevant.

Abbreviations, Academic Degrees, and Acronyms

ABBREVIATIONS

In general, avoid abbreviations and follow AP Style. As a general rule, all-uppercase abbreviations have no periods. Exceptions (listed below) include U.S., U.N., and most academic degrees. (We put periods in U.S. and U.N. to ensure readability.)

United States, United Nations, United Kingdom

Spell out United States, United Nations, and United Kingdom when they do not modify another noun.

Abbreviate to U.S., U.N., and U.K. when modifying a noun, such as: U.S. environmental policy, U.S. ambassador to Turkey, U.S. Tax Court, U.S. Supreme Court, U.N. diplomacy, U.K. legal system.

Organizations and Institutions

Use abbreviations sparingly. Well-known abbreviations like EPA (Environmental Protection Agency), ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union), or SEC (Securities Exchange Commission) may be used if they will be repeated at least two times in a single article or web page. Enclose the abbreviation in parentheses after spelling it out the first time. The next sentence should be in the same graph: If you will not use an abbreviation or initialism after spelling out the full name on first reference, do not provide it in parentheses at all.

Do not use initialisms—CAA for Clean Air Act or FCPA for Foreign Corrupt Practices Act—that are not widely known, unless there is a strong contextual reason for their use.

The “Law School” and “Columbia Law” are preferred shortened versions of Columbia Law School. CLS is acceptable in limited cases in informal, brief communications, such as social media posts and emails, where the tone is deliberately warm and casual.

ACADEMIC DEGREES

(see also: Alumni Designations)

Columbia Degrees

J.D. = Juris Doctor, three-year program

LL.M. = Master of Laws, a one-year course of full-time study by students who have already obtained a basic law degree.

J.S.D. = Doctor of the Science of Law; the Law School's most advanced law degree and is considered an equivalent to a Ph.D.

LL.B. = degree no longer awarded in the United States, was the equivalent to J.D.; still awarded to undergraduates in some countries.

M.C.L. = degree no longer awarded, equivalent to LL.M.

Other Degrees

Per *AP Style*: B.A., B.S., M.A., M.S., M.D., and Ph.D., **but leave periods out of MBA**. AP doesn't specify how to treat M.P.A. nor other degrees not listed, so treat it as all other degrees.

In our publications, we do not use "Dr." for someone who has a Ph.D. Include apostrophes and do not capitalize: bachelor's degree, master's degree.

Associates in Law degree does not have an apostrophe.

Professional Titles

Per *AP Style*, the following titles are always abbreviated when they appear before a name, both inside and outside of quotes: Dr., Gov., Lt. Gov., Rep., Sen., Pvt., and certain other military ranks.

The abbreviation Prof. for a faculty member is used only in headlines or social media posts where space is at a premium.

Professor is used for full-time faculty at the Law School. For part-time faculty who wish to identify as being from Columbia, adjunct professor, lecturer, or researcher may be used, depending on the individual's status.

Publications

When shortening the name of *Columbia Law Review*, call it "the law review" without italics.

Alumni Designations

For Law School alumni, place a “backward” apostrophe and two-digit graduation year one space after name on first usage. (To signify a graduation year more than 99 years past, use four-digit number.)

Specify the degree only if the graduate received a degree other than a J.D.

- Michael Porter '68 will present the award.
- Gerald Rogers 1906 was honored at the ceremony.
- Stacey Ericsson '99 LL.M. specializes in patent litigation.

If the Law School graduate has additional Columbia degrees, each degree should be listed as follows: Philip McKinney CC '72, LAW '86, BUS '95.

Be sure to use curly (') rather than straight vertical quotes (").

To make the backward apostrophe (') on a PC, in some versions of Word, you can hold down the Ctrl and Function keys and then type the apostrophe twice. Alternatively, simply type the apostrophe key twice ("); then delete the first apostrophe. On a Mac, type: Option + Shift +]

Refer to classes with the full year: The Class of 1958 celebrated its 50th reunion in May.

Capitalization

See also Titles, for Columbia faculty, programs, classes, etc.

On second reference to Columbia Law School, the standalone words Law School should be capitalized. This is an exception to *AP Style*.

On second reference to Columbia University, the word university should be lowercase.

Capitalize the proper names of Columbia University departments:

Department of Economics, Department of Germanic Languages.

Do not capitalize informal usage:

She taught in the economics department.

Per *AP Style*, in headlines, as well as in event, lecture, and speech titles, capitalize all principal words (including It and Is, and all prepositions of four letters or more (With, Over, Through, Above)).

In headlines as well as in event, lecture, and speech titles, lowercase common prepositions and articles (the, an, to, of, etc.).

Per *AP Style*, professional or job titles given after a person's name are in lower case.

EXAMPLES: *Jessica Bulman-Pozen is a professor of law. Larry Smith is the executive director of the human rights organization. Kirsten Gillibrand is a senator from New York.*

Endowed titles remain capitalized after the individual's name:

Jane Ginsburg, the Morton L. Janklow Professor of Literary and Artistic Property Law, spoke on the panel.

The seasons winter, spring, summer, and fall are lowercase.

Names of semesters (spring semester, fall semester, spring 2018) are lowercase.

Lower case: internet, web, website



Columbia Law Titles and Names

The Law School, Its Programs, Faculty, Courses, and More

TITLES (INSTITUTIONAL)

Columbia Law School

Our style is to write Columbia Law School on first reference.

Although diplomas say Columbia University School of Law, we do not use this name in our day-to-day writing.

On second reference, writers may shorten to Columbia Law or the Law School. (NOTE: the latter is an exception to the *AP Stylebook*, which mandates lower case when shortening the name of an institution.)

CLS may be used occasionally in casual situations, such as in social media. NOTE: Avoid the possessive with CLS. If it needs to be possessive, rework the sentence, or use Columbia Law.

When referring to any other law school without using its proper noun title, “law school” is not capitalized.

Center and Program Names

With few exceptions, Law School centers and programs do not begin with the word “The.”

For centers and programs, use “and,” not ampersands, in the title.

On subsequent references to centers and programs, do not capitalize center, program, etc.

Law School Events, Lectures, and Course Names

Place lecture titles in quotes: Derrick Wang gave the lunch lecture “Music Copyright from a Composer’s Perspective.”

Conferences, panels, speakers series, and symposiums should be placed in quotes and are capitalized only when used as formal titles and proper nouns. Do not capitalize words like “annual meeting.”

- *Smith attended a conference on human rights [not Human Rights] at Kentucky Law School.*
- *Smith attended the third annual “Assessing Human Rights in a Quickly Globalizing World” speaker series.*

Capitalize courses, clinics, and externships only when used as proper nouns. Do not use quotes.

- *Professor Jeffrey Gordon’s course Comparative Corporate Governance: A Dynamic Perspective...*
- *Professor Jeffrey Gordon’s course on comparative governance...*

TITLES (PEOPLE)

Law School Dean

On first mention, where possible, refer to the dean by her complete title: *Gillian Lester, Dean and the Lucy G. Moses Professor of Law, gave the keynote address.*

If the story does not allow for the full title on first mention, it should be used in one of the next two mentions.

For all subsequent mentions, refer to her as Dean Lester (unlike other faculty, who go by last name only).

Where feasible, “Dean Lester” is preferred over, simply, “the Dean.”

One exception to AP Style—Dean is capitalized everywhere, when referring to Dean Lester.

Professor Names and Titles

On first mention, use the professors' first name and last name. The professors' name should be followed by their full title if a formal named title exists and doing so would not interrupt the flow of the sentence where their formal title is first mentioned.

Double initials appear without space between them: *H.L. Mencken*.

When the sentence does not allow for use of a full title on first mention or the relevant professor has no formal title, "Professor" should be used, with the professor's full title—if applicable—worked into the story in a subsequent mention

- First mention of a professor with a formal title: *Jane Ginsburg, the Morton L. Janklow Professor of Literary and Artistic Property Law, spoke on the panel.*
- Faculty without formal titles: *Professor Robin Smith spoke on the panel.*
- Note, for endowed chairs, insert the word "the" before the name of the chair, as above.

On subsequent mentions, refer to the professor by last name only:

- *...Ginsburg addressed emerging trends in copyright reform.*

The abbreviation Prof. is used only in headlines or social media posts where space is at a premium.

Provide professor's graduation year on first mention if he/she is a Columbia Law School alumnus/a.

Per *AP Style*, non-endowed titles are not capitalized after a faculty member's name:

- *Emily Jones is a professor of law.*

Lecturer in Law is not hyphenated and should be capitalized when it precedes a name.

Judges and Supreme Court Justices

Use full title on first mention and last name only on subsequent mentions:

- *Judge Priscilla Owen of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit visited the Law School.... Owen practiced commercial litigation at Andrews & Kurth.*

NOTE: Those sitting on any supreme court use the title “Justice,” not “Judge.” This is the case in New York and other states where the supreme court functions as a lower court in a state’s system.

The U.S. Supreme Court chief justice is called the *chief justice of the United States*, not *of the Supreme Court*: *Chief Justice John Roberts*.

The other eight members of the court are called *associate justices*. However, their honorific should be reduced to Justice unless there are special circumstances: *Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg*.

AP Style avoids “the honorable” or “Hon.” In text, the words “the Honorable” before a dignitary’s name are used only in direct quotes or lists of dignitaries (in lists, the abbreviation Hon. can be used). In special situations such as event programs, invitations, or headings of individual bios “The Honorable” can be used as a courtesy. Otherwise, simply use the person’s title (such as Justice or Mayor).

Mayor Bill De Blasio spoke at the law school on Tuesday. “We’d like to thank the Honorable Bill De Blasio for stopping by,” said Hector Lopez, in his introductory remarks.

Other Professional Titles

Professional titles given after a person’s name are in lower case. Examples:

- *Larry Smith is the executive director of the human rights organization.*
- *David Greenwald ’83, deputy general counsel and international general counsel at investment bank Goldman Sachs, has spent the last four years immersed in the global financial crisis.*

Per *AP Style*, the following titles are always abbreviated when they appear before a name: Dr., Gov., Lt. Gov., Rep., Sen., Pvt., and certain other military ranks.

Titles (Publications and other Creative Works)

Titles of full-length works (books, magazines, journals, law reviews, newspapers, albums, TV shows, plays, artworks) should be placed in italics:

- He enjoyed *Heart of Darkness* by Conrad.
- She read a piece on income-tax policy in *The Wall Street Journal*.
- He says Springsteen's *Born to Run* is his favorite album.

REFERENCES IN PROSE

Editor in a publication reference is always listed after the publication:

- Professor Jones published *Grecian Law* (James Smith and Karl Black, eds.)

Between editor and publisher, use a semicolon:

- (James Smith, ed.; Knopf)

Titles that are portions or subsets of large artistic works (journal articles, songs, poems) are placed in quotes:

- Elsa Jones published "Law and the Courts" in the *Harvard Law Review*.
- Larry Williams wrote a chapter called "Public International Law" that appeared in *Perspectives on International Law* (Oxford University Press, 2000).
- He lists Gloria Gaynor's "I Will Survive" among his favorite songs.

Language and Spelling Preferences

Law School Students and Graduates

We prefer to use the terms “first-year,” “second-year,” and “third-year” when referring to students in public-facing formal text, such as press releases, news articles, or conference announcements. However, writers may intersperse 1L, 2L, and 3L with audiences that are likely to be familiar with this treatment, such as current students, prospective students, or alumni.

Alum, grad: In the most formal communications, such as press releases or white papers, do not use the shortened words “alum” or “alums” and “grad.” These words are acceptable in informal communications, such as social media posts. Exception: Shortened versions can be used in website headlines or blurbs where space is tight.

Alumna, alumnus:

- Alumna = female graduate
- Alumnus = male graduate or graduate of nonspecific gender
- Alumnae = two or more female graduates
- Alumni = two or more male or mixed male and female graduates or graduates of non-specific gender
- The word “graduate” is a good alternative when gender is unknown.

Miscellaneous Spelling and Language Preferences

Advisers, not advisors, except in professional titles that use Advisor.

Avoid contractions such as “she’s” or “you’ll” in formal writing, such as press releases or reports. However, these may be used in informal writing, such as news articles or social media posts.

Past, not last, unless something really is last: In the past year, he worked for Smith & Green. Be sure not to use “last” when “latest” is called for. “Last” implies that something is final.

Type *résumé*, not resume

If you are writing a list and presenting the items in alphabetical order, alphabetize by letters, not the first letter of every word.

For example, courses would be listed as follows:

Law and Theater

Law and the Music Industry

Titled, not entitled: *The article was titled "Maritime Law in Britain."*

In words such as traveled, canceled, and benefited, do not double the final consonant. (Enrolled has two Ls).

Use the word "percent" instead of the percentage sign in text. The only exceptions are graphic presentations, such as infographics.

Percent is a specific number: 60 percent.

Percentage is a rate per 100 or a proportion: *Ninety-nine percent of law students would like to do pro bono work during their careers. What is the percentage of students from Ohio at the Law School?*

Be careful not to confuse percent with percentage points. For example, if enrollment of international students increases from 12 to 16 percent of the student body, that is not an increase of 4 percent; it's an increase of 4 percentage points. The increase is actually 33.3 percent.

Always use figures with percent: *1 percent, 6 percent.*

Columbia Law Quirks

The University's Teaching Award given out at graduation should be called the Presidential Award for Excellence in Teaching. In talking about the award, the university uses the plural, Presidential Awards for Excellence in Teaching. No other name is correct.

Do not use a comma between someone's name and "Jr."

Tech/Web-Related Terms

Do not use www (or http) before a web address.

When hyperlinking to articles, documents, sites, or organizations, highlight the entire title you are linking to.

Do not write “click” or “click here” or insert arrows before a link. Simply embed the link.

EXAMPLE: The article is called “**1930s Redux: The Administrative State Under Siege.**”

Internet and web are lowercase.

Website and homepage are one word, both lowercase.

Legal Language

U.S. Supreme Court or Supreme Court of the United States. Not United States Supreme Court. Capitalize Supreme Court when “U.S.” is not needed. Court is always capitalized when referring to the Supreme Court, but not to lower courts.

Always refer to the 13 federal appeals courts by naming their jurisdictions, such as:

U.S. Court of Appeals for the 2nd Circuit or 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. On subsequent references, the court's name may be shortened to 2nd Circuit or 2nd Circuit court. You can also call them federal appeals courts.

Court cases are italicized and use “v.” not “vs.”

EXAMPLE: *Brown v. Board of Education*

Don't italicize pro bono.

Court decisions:

The court ruled 8-1 or an 8-1 decision

Use the word “to” in quotations:

“The court ruled 8 to 1,” Professor Gordon said.

Use numerals in 5th Circuit or 9th Circuit, and do not use superscript for “th.”

For law firms that use LLC or LLP after their names, include these letters, with no comma before them and no periods.

Numbers

General

Spell out numbers zero through nine.

Use figures for 10 and up.

Use figures whenever preceding a unit of measure, ages, money, rankings, and percentages:

4 miles, 6 percent, 9-inch snowfall, 6 years old, 5 billion, Kentucky was ranked No. 3.

When showing a range of numbers in prose, use the word “to” rather than a dash:

The meeting was held from June 2 to 4.

Ordinals

Spell out ordinals first through ninth: sixth century; use figures for 10th and up:

21st century. (NOTE: Do not use superscript “th”)

Per *AP Style*: When large numbers are spelled out (such as at the start of a sentence), use a hyphen to connect a word ending in -y to another word:

twenty-one, fifty-five, etc.

Spell out streets nine and under:

Sixth Avenue.

Times

Use a.m. and p.m.

When referring to the hour without minutes, simply write the number:

9 a.m., 3 p.m.

Spell out noon and midnight:

The eclipse will be visible from midnight to 1 a.m.

In running text, do not repeat a.m. or p.m. or use a dash in a span of time:

The symposium will run from 9 to 10:30 a.m.

Years

1980s

The '80s

Show entire years when expressing a span, separated by an en dash:

1978–1979 academic year

Telephone Numbers

Use hyphens, not periods or parentheses: 212-854-2680.

When providing an extension, use just an “x” followed by the extension:

212-854-2680 x 120.

Publication Specifications

Online Publications

When hyperlinking to news sites or documents, highlight the entire title you are linking to.

EXAMPLE: Her article is called “**1930s Redux: The Administrative State Under Siege.**”

Headlines

Capitalize the first word and all principal words (nouns, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives, including *It* and *Is*, and all prepositions of four letters and up (With, Over, Through, Above)).

Do not capitalize articles (*a*, *an*, *the*) or prepositions or conjunctions of fewer than four letters (*to*, *for*, *and*, *but*).

EXAMPLE: *Inside the Secret World of Quants and Data Crunchers Who Helped Obama Win*

Captions

We use *(left to right)*, not *(l to r)*. In a photo caption with many names, we use commas as follows: *(Third row, left to right) Joe Smith, Frank Ellis, Susan Harris, and Wendy Johnson*

If describing multiple rows, use a semicolon between each, and state “left to right” only once:

(First row, left to right) Joe Smith, Frank Ellis, Susan Harris, and Wendy Johnson; (second row) Lisa Altman, Jamie Sanders, Robert Masters

Use a period at the end of a caption only if it is a complete sentence:

- *Carla Peters gave the opening address at the Morrison Dinner.*
- *(Left to right) Dean Lester, Adam Thompson, and Patti Lewis*

Use alumni years in photo captions, even if used previously within text.

Citations

Generally, when Columbia Law School mentions published material in one of its publications, it is not necessary to provide a formal citation.

For example: “As Ron Chernow wrote in the 2004 book *Alexander Hamilton...*”;
“As Greenpeace reported on its homepage in April 2018...”

However, if a footnoted bibliographic reference is preferred, defer to the Chicago Manual of Style author-date method. Use a superscript endnote in the text, and list all references at the end of the article. Examples:

Book Schmidt, Peter. 1987. *Learning to Row*. San Francisco: HarperCollins.

Journal Article Welton, Shelley. 2018. “Electricity Markets and the Social Project of Decarbonization.” *Columbia Law Review* 118 (4).

Web Content Columbia Law School. n.d. “2017 Entering Class Profile.” Accessed June 6, 2018. www.law.columbia.edu/admissions/jd/experience/class-profile.

For examples of other types of citations, see: www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

For a legal journal or other scholarly publication, please refer to the Blue Book.

Punctuation

Avoid Ampersands

We avoid using ampersands except when an organization or program incorporates it in an official name.

At the Law School, there are no ampersands in program names.

Bullet Lists

If the bullet list consists of fragments—whether single words or longer phrases, lowercase the first word of each line. If the list completes a sentence, place a period at the end of the list.

FOR EXAMPLE: *Please bring the following to the meeting:*

- *notepad*
- *pen*
- *folder*

If the bulleted items serve as complete sentences, capitalize the first letter of each bulleted entry, and end each one with a period.

FOR EXAMPLE: *Meeting participants made the following suggestions:*

- *Recruit volunteers for a reunion committee.*
- *Select the reunion date.*
- *Select a location.*

Commas

We use the serial comma: *Joe, Bill, and Mike went to law school.* (Not: *Joe, Bill and Mike went to law school.*) Note: This style is an exception to *AP Style*.

When writing a full date, put commas on both sides of the year:

The meeting was held on March 1, 2018, and 200 people attended.

When giving only the month and year, there is no comma:

The meeting was held in March 2018.

Dashes (see also: Hyphenation)

Use the em dash (—) without a space on either side to make an abrupt break in a sentence: *More than 2,000 listings—including more than 50 new ones—appear in this edition.*

- To make the em dash on a Mac, type alt+shift+hyphen, or, on a PC, type Ctrl-Alt-minus.

Use the en dash to indicate duration of time:

- 2018–2019, not 2018–19
- January 4–6
- To make the en dash, type, on a PC, Ctrl-minus. On a Mac, hold down the Shift and Option keys and press the Minus key.

Use the en dash to make a compound adjective that connects a multi-word proper name:

- New York City–funded services
- Columbia Law School–sponsored event

In prose, don't use en dashes to indicate the word "to." For instance, "the conference will be held from Wednesday to Friday," not "Wednesday-Friday."

Ellipses

Here, we follow *Chicago* style. When using ellipses, do not use the quick key. Manually create spaces between each period: . . .

When using ellipses to indicate words missing from a sentence, insert spaces before, after, and between each of the three periods:

The group offered legal services . . . to the homeless.

When using ellipses at the end of a sentence, end the sentence with a closed-up period as usual, then add a space, three periods, and another space before beginning the next sentence:

The group offered legal services to the homeless. . . . The program closed in 2016.

Per *Chicago*, other punctuation, such as a comma or semicolon, may be preserved from the original text, before or after the three ellipses as appropriate, to help make sense of the passage.

Exclamation Points

Avoid using exclamation points. Use only when absolutely necessary to show a high degree of surprise, incredulity, or strong emotion.

Hyphenation

AP Style dictates the use of a hyphen in compound adjectives whenever there is room for ambiguity. We use the hyphen to join *most* of such compounds:

- Low-income residents, workforce-development project, six-year-old boy, well-documented effort, small-business owners
- Use caution when using often-hyphenated combinations that do not precede a noun; for example: she was a full-time employee, but she worked full time.
- *ly* words are not hyphenated: *carefully edited paper*, *widely available data*
- Use a hyphen (not semicolon) to clarify: resign/re-sign; recover/re-cover; recreation; re-creation
- Per *AP Style*, use a hyphen to designate dual heritage: *African-American*, *Italian-American*, *Mexican-American*.
- Do not use hyphens for *French Canadian* or *Latin American*.
- Do not use hyphens or capitalization for editor in chief, commander in chief, unless preceding a name, such as Editor-in-Chief Tomi Williams.
- Hyphenate fractions: *one-third*, *nine-tenths*.

Exceptions: The Law School makes these exceptions:

- Unambiguous constructions such as health care policy, breast cancer research
- Common law school or legal concepts, such intellectual property law, public interest law, domestic violence cases.
- Dual degree programs

Prefixes

Generally do not hyphenate when a prefix ending in a vowel (pre-, re-) precedes a word starting with a consonant. When the word starts with a vowel, rules vary. Overall, AP acknowledges that there is much variability in prefix rules, particularly with the prefix co-; see below and consult the dictionary.

- email
- multimedia
- nonprofit
- noninvasive
- nonemergency
- online
- postdoctoral
- postgraduate
- postwar
- pretest (but: post-test for readability)
- predeployment
- pre-existing
- re-enact
- re-establish
- socioeconomic

Per *AP Style*: Generally do not hyphenate the co- prefix except in words indicating occupation or status. **EXAMPLES:**

- co-author
- co-chair
- co-director
- co-founder
- coexist, cooperate, coordinate

Miscellaneous Rules

AP Style rules governing the prefix “anti-” are confusing. Most words, such as anti-pollution and anti-war, are hyphenated. But there is a list of words that have independent meanings, such as antitrust, antidote, and antidepressant, that do not take a hyphen.

log off, log on (verbs); logoff, logon (nouns)

policymakers, *but* decision makers

vice president, *not* vice-president

Bibliographic References and Citations in Prose

In running text, the editor in a publication reference is always listed after the publication:

Professor Jones published *Grecian Law* (James Smith and Karl Black, eds.)

Between editor and publisher, use a semicolon:

(James Smith, ed.; Knopf)

Footnoted journal articles follow *Chicago style*. Here is a typical example:

7. Acosta, Rolando, “Sheila Abdus-Salaam: The Value of Contribution,” *Columbia Law Review* 118, no. 1 (2018), 46-56.

Tricky Possessives

Per *AP Style*, When a plural noun ending in “s” is used as a singular, simply place an apostrophe after the s. *General Motors’ profits, the United States’ wealth.*

If the word ends in a “s” sound but not the letter s, add 's: *Fritz’s nose, the fox’s den, the justice’s verdict, Marx’s theories, the prince’s life, Xerox’s profits.*

Use 's for proper names ending in s: *Agnes’s book, Dickens’s novels, Kansas’s schools, Moses’s law, Socrates’s life, Tennessee Williams’s plays.*

Questions? Concerns?

Please contact editorial@law.columbia.edu.