

Highlights of NC State Editorial Style

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Avoid alphabet soup. Don't use abbreviations or acronyms the reader wouldn't easily recognize.

Use periods in most two-letter abbreviations: U.S., U.N., U.K. (exceptions include VR and ID). In headlines, do not use periods in abbreviations. Use all caps, but no periods, in longer abbreviations when the individual letters are pronounced: ABC, CIA, FBI.

Abbreviate these titles when used before a full name (outside a direct quotation): Gov., Lt. Gov., Rep., Rev. and Sen.

Academic Degrees

It's preferable to avoid abbreviation by using wording such as: John Jones has a bachelor's degree in psychology. When abbreviating, use periods for two-letter abbreviations, such as B.A. and M.S., and for uppercase/lowercase degrees (Ph.D., Ed.D., M.Arch.). Otherwise, don't use periods (BSW, MFA, etc.).

Use an apostrophe in bachelor's degree, master's degree (not capitalized).

Capitalize if using the **formal name** of a degree: "She has a Bachelor of Science in management." Don't capitalize the major unless it's part of the formal name of the degree, such as a Master of Business Administration.

Addresses

House/building number is always a numeral: **5** Main St., Raleigh, NC

Numbered street names follow the rules for numerals (write out one through nine; use figures for 10 and above): **5 Sixth St.**, **5 10th Ave.**

Abbreviate Ave., Blvd., St. in a full address. Write out other thoroughfare terms such as Alley, Circle, Court, Drive, Road, etc.

If it's not a complete address, don't abbreviate: "The White House is on Pennsylvania Avenue."

Capitalization

Avoid unnecessary capitalization.

Capitalize proper nouns and proper names: Jane Jones, the Democratic Party, the Mississippi River.

Capitalize a formal title only when it precedes a name: "The event was hosted by Chancellor Randy Woodson. The chancellor welcomed the guests."

Lowercase common nouns when they stand alone: the party, the river, the university, the college, the department, the board.

Lowercase the common noun elements of names in plural uses: the Democratic and Republican parties. Exception: plurals of formal titles with full names are capitalized: Presidents Barack Obama and George W. Bush attended.

Composition Titles

Titles and names of large works and publications — books, journals, magazines, newspapers, albums, television shows and the like — are italicized: The *Washington Post* has requested an interview with the chancellor.

Composition Titles (continued)

Use quotation marks around the titles of shorter works: poems, short stories, essays, articles, songs, episodes, etc. Example: My favorite episode of *The Office* is "The Convict."

Commas

In a simple series, separate the final two items with a conjunction (such as and, or, nor, etc.) with no comma: I am taking courses in English, anatomy and biology.

However, when required for clarity or to avoid confusion, do use a comma before the conjunction: He's taking classes in accounting, English, and French language and literature.

Don't use a comma before Inc., Jr., Sr. or III: The James B. Hunt Jr. Library.

Dates

April 3, not April 3rd.

When a year is used with a month and date, set the year off with commas: The semester begins Jan. 3, 2019, and ends May 15, 2019.

When a month is used with a date, abbreviate Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec. Do not abbreviate March, April, May, June or July. Examples: Jan. 3, 2017; March 15, 2010.

Spell out month names when using alone or with a year alone: School starts in August. He is renting the house until January 2020.

Dr.

Both the AP and NC State discourage the use of "Dr." as a title in front of someone's name in most cases. It's preferable to state the person's academic rank and/or field of expertise: Derek Ham, assistant professor of graphic design, is an expert in virtual reality.

Numbers

In general, spell out one through nine, and use figures for 10 or above, with a few exceptions. Always use figures for:

Ages: a 6-year-old girl; the law is 8 years old; the 7-year-old house.

Decimals, percentages, fractions: 7.2 quake, 3½ laps, 3.7% interest.

Dimensions: She is 5 feet, 6 inches tall.

Distances: He walked 4 miles. She missed a 3-foot putt.

Millions, billions, trillions: 1 million people; \$2 billion.

Money: 8 cents, \$3

Speed: 55 miles per hour

Temperature: 20 degrees

Time

Lowercase with periods: a.m. and p.m.

Do not use :00 for even hours: 11 a.m.

Use noon for 12 p.m. and midnight for 12 a.m.

Span of time: 9-11 a.m., 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.