

This writing style guide is offered as a reference for websites, newsletters, and articles. It is based on a combination of sources:

- *The Associated Press Stylebook* (Basic Books, 2011)
- *The Chicago Manual of Style, Fifteenth Edition* (University of Chicago Press, 2003)
- *The Elements of Style, Fourth Edition* (Allyn and Bacon, 2000)
- *Guide to Rules of Address* (Church Pension Group, 2007)
- *Webster's New World College Dictionary, Fourth Edition* (Wiley, 2010)
- *World Christian Encyclopedia, Second Edition* (Oxford University Press, 2001)

It is also based on the e-magazine styles of Salon, Slate, and Smithsonian.com.

Please note that different editorial styles and rules of language usage apply in their various contexts. Although Microsoft Word and other word-processing software may flag an item for review, such programs are limited in scope, and suggestions should be used as a guide only – not a source of definitive answers to questions of editorial style.

Basic formatting guidelines:

One space between sentences

Double line break between paragraphs, no indents

Times New Roman 12 pt. font

When using a dash, use an en dash with a space before and after, not an em dash, hyphen, or double hyphen. Please use the en dash sparingly; often a semicolon or comma would be more appropriate.

For additional information on punctuation and grammar, please refer to *The Associated Press Stylebook* (Basic Books, 2011). Much of the following information is borrowed and/or paraphrased from that source.

A

abbreviations and acronyms: In general, avoid acronyms. If it is necessary to use an acronym, spell it out on first usage and supply the acronym in parentheses after: the Episcopal Youth Event (EYE). Never use ERD as an acronym for Episcopal Relief & Development.

academic degrees: A Master of Divinity degree or a master's degree in divinity, not an M.Div. A Bachelor of Arts degree or a bachelor's degree or a bachelor's.

addresses: Use the abbreviations Ave., Blvd., and St. only with a numbered address: 815 Second Ave. Spell them out and capitalize when part of a formal street name without a number: Second Avenue. Lowercase and spell out when used alone or with more than one street name: Lexington and Madison avenues. Spell out and capitalize numbered streets First through Ninth, and use ordinal numbers for 10th and above: 245 W. 114th St.

afterward: Not afterwards.

all of a sudden: Not all of the sudden.

all right: Not alright.

all time, all-time: An all-time high, but the greatest runner of all time. In general, a compound adjective is only hyphenated when used before the noun it is modifying. His well-known companion was also well received.

altar, alter: An altar is a table-like platform used in a religious service. To alter is to change.

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

amid: Not amidst.

among, between: “Between” introduces two items, and “among” introduces more than two: The cookies were divided among Billy, Sally, and Tiffany.

ampersand (&): Use the ampersand when it is part of a company’s formal name or composition title: Episcopal Relief & Development, Bed Bath & Beyond. In general use, do not use the ampersand in place of “and.”

apostrophe (’): Use ’s to indicate the possessive of nouns not ending in s: Timothy’s. Use just an apostrophe (’) for nouns ending in s: Jesus’, James’. For parishes named after a saint, the saint’s name takes an apostrophe: St. Timothy’s Episcopal Church, St. James’ Episcopal Church, All Angels’ Episcopal Church.

B

baby boomer: Lowercase, two words, no hyphen unless being used as an adjective before a noun: The baby boomers were not interested in listening to anything except baby-boomer music.

backward: Not backwards.

baptist: A person who baptizes is a baptist (lowercase). A Baptist (uppercase) is a member of the Baptist Church. John the Baptist is capitalized since it is a proper noun.

the Bible: Lowercase “the,” capital “B,” without italics. He reads the Bible every day. Lowercase bible as a nonreligious term: My style book is my bible.

biblical: Lowercase in all uses.

the Book of Common Prayer: Like the Bible, lowercase “the” and title case Book of Common Prayer, no italics. In citations, spell out: (Book of Common Prayer, p. 207), not (BCP, p. 207). See also “page numbers.”

books: When citing a book, list the title of the book in italics followed by the publisher and year published in parentheses. In his book *The Feast of the World's Redemption* (Trinity Press, 2000), the Rev. John T. Koenig discusses the importance of the Eucharist.

books of the Bible: Do not abbreviate individual books of the Bible. Capitalize the names of the books, but do not capitalize “the”: She quoted from the Book of Ruth and the Gospel of John. Gospel is lowercase when not part of the name of a particular book in the Bible: He read the gospel to the crowd every week, and this week he read from the Gospel of John.

biannual, biennial: Biannual means twice a year and is a synonym for the word semiannual. Biennial means every two years.

bishop: Capitalize when part of a proper name, but lowercase in all other uses. Bishop John Doe was the bishop of that diocese for seven years.

C

capitalization: Avoid unnecessary capitals. Arbitrary and insupportable capitalization is especially prevalent in religious writing, where capital letters are often misused to

convey a sense of importance. Use a capital letter only if you can justify it by one of the principles listed below:

- Proper nouns: John the Baptist
- Proper Names: the Republican Party; but lowercase for the Democratic and Republican parties. Lake Erie, but lakes Erie and Superior.
- Popular Names: the Badlands (of South Dakota), the Derby (for the Kentucky Derby).
- Derivatives: Shakespearean, Christian, Edwardian. Once words have been in usage long enough that they no longer depend on their proper nouns for meaning, use lowercase: french fries, herculean effort, pasteurize, quixotic, venetian blind.
- Sentences: Capitalize the first word in a statement that stands as a sentence.
- Compositions: Capitalize the principal words in the names of books, movies, plays, poems, operas, songs, radio and television programs, and works of art.
- Titles: Capitalize formal titles when used immediately before a name. Use lowercase for terms that are job descriptions rather than formal titles: To the president's chagrin, the Senate Republicans blocked a vote to nominate Chuck Hagel as defense secretary. Hagel is President Barack Obama's pick for Secretary of Defense.

- Holy concepts: Some flexibility in capitalization is given in religious writing when talking about concepts such as the Word of God, the Kingdom of God, and Jesus being “the Light, the Truth, and the Way.” Please do not go overboard with this; this editorial license should be used with great moderation and restraint.

chapter: Capitalize Chapter 1, Chapter 2, but lowercase for “the second chapter.”

the church: Lowercase. The Episcopal Church. An Episcopal church.

churchwide: One word, lowercase.

commas: Use a serial comma to separate items in a list. He bought apples, oranges, and bananas.

Use a comma to offset additional information about something or someone: “My sister, Alison” implies you have one sister and her name is Alison. Without the comma, “my sister Alison” implies you have other sisters as well.

D

dashes: Use an en dash with a space on either side when a dash is required in the body of the text. Please use the en dash sparingly, using instead commas and semicolons

when possible. An em dash is used for citations, following a quote in an epigraph: “All shall be well.” — St. Julian of Norwich

dates: A comma should separate the day of the week, the day of the month, and year: Tuesday, May 21, 2013, was the due date. If an exact day of the month is not supplied, a comma is not needed: April 2013 was a rainy month. Likewise: spring 2013. Do not use ordinal numbers such as 1st, 2nd, 3rd when writing a day of the month.

different: Different from, not different than.

diocese: Capitalize as part of a proper name, such as the Diocese of Rochester, but lowercase in all other instances: He was the fifth bishop of that diocese.

directions and regions: Lowercase south when used as a direction: Austin is south of Dallas. But capitalize when referring to the region: She spoke with a Southern accent and was sure the South would rise again. The Near East, the Middle East, the West Coast, the Upper East Side. Note that western Texas has a different meaning from West Texas, which is a specific region.

E

e.g.: When using *exempli gratia* (e.g.), which means “for example,” always follow with a comma and separate from the sentence with parentheses. He was not a fan of sarcasm (e.g., his older brother saying, “Oh, I’m so scared,” to taunt him). Do not confuse with *id est* (i.e.), which means “in other words” and is used to clarify a sentence instead of providing an example.

See “i.e.” entry below.

etc.: Avoid using this at the end of lists. Supply as many specific examples as possible and then stop.

email: Not e-mail.

Episcopal, Episcopalian: Episcopal is the adjective; use Episcopalian only as a noun referring to a member of The Episcopal Church: She is an Episcopalian and she is also an Episcopal priest.

The Episcopal Church: The T in “the” before Episcopal Church is capitalized. Please do not use the acronyms TEC or ECUSA. The corporate headquarters of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society staff offices should not be referred to as “815.”

F

foreign words: These should be written in italics: The word “mission” comes from the Latin verb *mittere*, “to be sent out.”

G

gentile: Lowercase.

God: Capitalize when referring to the one God. Lowercase when referring to the deities of polytheistic religions and in words such as god-awful, godlike, godliness, and godsend.

gospel: Lowercase unless referring to a specific book in the Bible: Today’s gospel reading comes from the Gospel According to Saint Luke.

H

I

i.e.: Use *id est* (i.e.), which means “in other words,” to clarify the sentence. He was not a fan of sarcasm (i.e., he preferred straight shooters). Do not confuse with e.g., which is used to provide a specific example. See “e.g.” entry above.

Internet: Capitalized.

italics: Avoid using italics for emphasis. Write clearly and give readers credit for being able to discern the important words. Italicize for emphasis only when drawing attention to a word within a quotation. Foreign words that are not commonly used in English should be italicized. The titles of books should also be in italics.

it's, its: “It’s” is a contraction for “it is.” “Its” is a possessive pronoun: It’s easy to admire its beauty. (Tip: When in doubt, substitute another possessive pronoun, such as “her”; if the sentence works, then use “its.”)

J

K

L

like: Avoid using “like” to mean “such as.” Like implies that it is similar to but not part of. “He enjoys movies like ‘Jaws,’” means that he did not enjoy “Jaws,” but enjoys other movies with qualities similar to “Jaws.”

M

N

numbers: 1950s or the '50s (Note that the apostrophe before the 5 is a left-facing apostrophe.) \$1 million. A hundred bucks. \$100 (no decimal point).

If a number is the first word of a sentence, it must be spelled out, with the exception of dates and years: Twenty-five years ago, he could ride a skateboard without breaking any bones. He hasn't been on a skateboard in 25 years. 1988 was when he quit.

Numbers less than 10 should be spelled out, numbers 10 and greater should be written as numerals. For centuries, spell out numbers less than 10: Table manners in the fifth century foreshadowed many of the practices of the 21st century.

O

online: One word, lowercase.

P

page numbers: In citations, abbreviate "page" as p., and "pages" as pp.: (Book of Common Prayer, pp. 206-207).

parenthesis, parentheses: If a parenthetical clause is a complete sentence and falls at the end of the sentence, it stands alone as a separate sentence: He didn't know the gorilla was hungry (despite all the warning signs) and so he ate a banana in front of him. (He won't do that again.)

phone numbers: Area code in parentheses: (212) 111-1111, ext. 1111. (If used within parentheses, use a hyphen after the area code: 212-111-1111, ext. 1111.)

provinces: Use Roman numerals when referring to provinces within The Episcopal Church: The Episcopal Church's most recent province is Province IX.

Q

quotes: Inset quotes that are four lines or longer. Use quotation marks, not italics. Citations at the end of the quote should be in parentheses with the period at the end. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life" (John 3:16). Note that when a quote is being used as an epigraph at the beginning of a work instead of within the body of the text, the rule is to put the period inside the quote: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." (John 3:16)

R

religious references:

Capitalize God, Allah, the Father, the Son, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Redeemer, the Holy Spirit. Use lowercase pronouns referring to the deity: he, him, his, thee, thou, who, whose, thy.

Capitalize major events in the life of Jesus Christ: the Last Supper, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, and the Ascension. But use lowercase when the words are used with his name: The ascension of Jesus into heaven took place 40 days after his resurrection from the dead.

Capitalize proper names for rites that commemorate the Last Supper or signify a belief in Christ's presence: the Lord's Supper, Holy Communion, Holy Eucharist. Use lowercase for the names of other sacraments.

Capitalize the names of holy days and feast days.

Lowercase heaven, hell, devil, angel, cherub, an apostle, a priest.

Capitalize Hades and Satan.

Apostles should be capitalized, as found in the Book of Common Prayer, when used as part of the name of an apostle.

religious titles: The first reference to a clergyman or clergywoman normally should include a capitalized title before the individual's name. On second reference to members of the clergy, use only a last name: the Rev. Billy Graham on first reference, Graham on second. Bishops are “the Right Reverend” or “the Rt. Rev.” Only the Presiding Bishop is “the Most Rev.” Please refer to *Guide to Rules of Address* (Church Pension Group, 2007).

rector: A priest who leads a parish.

RSS: a Rich Site Summary feed (nicknamed a Really Simple Syndication feed) is a web feed format used to publish frequently updated material on websites, such as news headlines and blogs.

S

sacraments: Capitalize the proper names used for a sacramental rite that commemorates the life of Jesus Christ or signifies a belief in his presence: the Lord's Supper, Holy Communion, Holy Eucharist. Use lowercase for the names of

other sacraments: baptism, confirmation, penance (sacrament of reconciliation), matrimony, holy orders, and the sacrament of anointing the sick (formerly extreme unction).

saint: In a title or as a proper noun, the abbreviation “St.” is preferred.

seasons: Lowercase: spring, fall, winter, summer.

scripture: Lowercase.

states: Spell out the names of states except in postal addresses. Commas should set apart the name of the city and the state: She was from Tonganoxie, Kansas, and rode a big black Harley.

T

that, which: “That” introduces a restrictive clause, and “which” introduces a non-restrictive or parenthetical clause. When in doubt, “which” always takes a comma before it, and “that” does not take a comma: I drove a rental car that was left for me by the agency. I drove a rental car, which was left for me by the agency.

their, his: “Their” is plural, “his” and “her” are singular. A common error is to start a sentence with a singular subject and then follow with a plural pronoun in an attempt to avoid assigning gender. The writer worried about her sexist pronouns. The writers were greatly relieved to have their neutrality restored.

they’re, their: “They’re” is a contraction for “they are”; “their” is a possessive pronoun: They’re admired for their generosity.

title case: Capitalize the principal words in a title, leaving lowercase all articles and prepositions with three letters or less: With, After, Through, That, the, an, a, of, in, on, for. The first word of a title is always capitalized. The subsequent parts of a hyphenated word may also be capitalized. The first word in a title after a full colon is capitalized: *The Adventures of Rambo the Cat: A Not-for-the-Faint-of-Heart Love Story.*

titles: Capitalize and spell out formal titles when they precede a name but lowercase elsewhere: The librarian found the book, and the presiding bishop made an announcement. The announcement was made by Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori. It was met with enthusiasm by Bishop John Doe from the Diocese of the Central Northwestern Gulf, the fifth bishop of that diocese.

Refer to both men and women by first and last name, with titles, on first reference:

the Rev. Canon Susan Smith or the Very Rev. Robert Smith. Refer to both men and women by last name only, without titles, in subsequent references. Please note that contact information given at the conclusion of the piece does not count as a subsequent reference; for contact information, please include the person's full name and title. See Guide to Rules of Address (Church Pension Group, 2007).

toward: Not towards.

U

URLs: When writing out a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) or link, include the full address, beginning with “http://” when space permits. Do not include the trailing slash at the end of the URL. For example, <http://www.episcopalchurch.org> is preferred; avoid www.episcopalchurch.org/. Please note that when a URL ends a sentence, a period is required.

V

verse: lowercase and not abbreviated when using in citation: (verse 2).

W

website: One word, lowercase.

who, whom: “Who” is a pronoun used as the subject of a sentence; “whom” is a pronoun used as the object of a sentence. When in doubt, substitute “he” for “who,” or “him” for “whom,” then see if the sentence works: Who was that masked man? (“He was that masked man,” not “Him was that masked man.”) Mr. Softee is the mascot to whom I am most loyal. (“I am loyal to him,” not “I am loyal to he.”)

World Wide Web: Three words, capitalized, but lowercase when using only “web.”

X

Y

yuletide: one word, lowercase, no hyphen.

Z

ZIP code: an acronym standing for Zoning Improvement Plan. Use all caps as with other acronyms.