

Inspiring Women Magazine Stylebook

Taken from *The Internet Marketing Written Style Guide*,
a publication of HubSpot

Reference

AP Style - See the 2011 AP Stylebook for reference.

Merriam-Webster - For questions of spelling, use the online Merriam-Webster Dictionary. Use the first spelling presented, and note that word presentations in the dictionary supersede the stylebook.

Capitalization

Titles of People and Terms Within Text:

People - Capitalize a person's title only when it's used directly before a name. This rule includes titles pertaining to government positions (like president, senator, mayor, ambassador, chief justice), religious positions (like pope, cardinal, rabbi), and other organizational positions (like chair, treasurer, general manager).

1. Dharmesh Shah is the founder and chief technology officer of HubSpot.
2. HubSpot Founder and Chief Technology Officer Dharmesh Shah.
3. She was appointed ambassador to the
4. United Nations by President Obama.
5. The president returned to the Oval
6. Office to greet the pope.
7. Pope Benedict XVI succeeded Pope
8. John Paul II.
9. The school was treated to a visit by former President Jimmy Carter.
10. Shan Chu was named general manager of the Chicago region.
11. General Manager Shan Chu began her career in the mailroom.

Terms - Within sentences, do not capitalize inbound marketing topics such as blogging, social media, search engine optimization, marketing analytics, lead generation, online video, etc. These are not proper nouns and, therefore, should not be capitalized. An exception is when these nouns refer specifically to paid applications in software, as in the HubSpot Blogging tool. In these cases, the word "tool" or "report" is not capitalized, but the name of the app is capitalized.

Titles of Published works

Always use title case:

1. Capitalize the first and last words, regardless of the length of the word or the part of speech.
2. Capitalize all nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and pronouns, regardless of the length of the word.
3. Capitalize prepositions of four or more letters (like over, from, and with).
4. Capitalize conjunctions of four or more letters (like unless and than), as well as if and how and why.

Do not capitalize:

1. Articles (a, an, and the)
2. Prepositions of three or fewer letters (such as of, in, and for)
3. Most conjunctions of three or fewer letters (like as, and, or, and but)
4. The “to” in the infinitive form (e.g. to Blog)

Examples:

1. “Don’t Fence Me In”
2. “Walk With Me in Moonlight”
3. “Turn Off the Lights, I’m Home” (“Off” is an adverb here, part of the phrasal verb “turn off.”)
4. “She Took the Deal off the Table” (Here, “off” is a preposition.)
5. “What If I Do, What If She Won’t”
6. “The Least She Could Do Is Cry”

Branded Lowercase Proper Nouns - If the first word in a title is a proper noun that begins with a lowercase letter (like iPhone or danah boyd), try to reorder the title so that you can capitalize the name as the company or person usually does. If such a noun falls elsewhere in the title, use the company’s capitalization style (iPhone). For instance, “Sales of iPod Soar.”

Numbers in Titles - For specific instructions on how to handle numbers in titles, see section on Numbers.

Hyphenated Compounds in Titles - If a hyphenated compound appears in title-style capitalization, capitalize the first word, and capitalize all subsequent words in the compound except for articles (a, an, and the), prepositions of three or fewer letters (like to and of), and coordinating conjunctions (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so). Ask yourself: If this word weren’t in a hyphenated compound, would I capitalize it? If the answer is yes, capitalize it as part of the hyphenated compound, too.

Examples:

1. The Big Spender's Budget How-To (Capitalize any word, even "to," at the beginning or end of a title.)
2. Author of How-to Book on Bee-Keeping Prone to Anaphylaxis
3. Governor Slams E-Book About Her Re-Election Campaign
4. Consumers Prefer Eco-Friendly and Cheap Products
5. Two-Thirds Vote Needed to Fund Research Into Blue-Green Algae Biofuel
6. Profits Double on Word-of-Mouth Sales
7. Audiences Love His Man-About-Town Sophistication
8. Open Your Own eBay-Based Boutique

Company and Product Names

Follow an organization's conventions as to how it capitalizes and punctuates its names. Many organizations (for example, FedEx) incorporate intercaps, or capital letters in the middle of the name. Other organizations, such as Yahoo!, incorporate punctuation characters in their names.

Some examples include:

1. iPod
2. iPod shuffle
3. IHOP
4. PayPal
5. Visa
6. MasterCard
7. Digg
8. YouTube

Pronouns Referring to Companies - When referring to your own or to another company, use the third-person singular pronouns *it* and *its*. In the United States, a company is treated as a collective noun and requires a singular verb and a singular pronoun. The company anticipates an increase in its third-quarter spending. (Singular verb, singular possessive "its")

additional tips: In some cases, you may not be able to replicate a graphic symbol used in a name. WALL·E, for instance, is difficult to reproduce and is generally spelled with a hyphen. When in doubt, look at some of the organization's press releases or at its copyright page if it has one.

For company, product, and website names that use all-lowercase letters, use an initial capital letter as you would for most other proper nouns. Otherwise, the names are hard to distinguish in text. For company names that include a capital letter somewhere (like eBay or iPod), follow the company's capitalization in most situations—even an internal capital letter will alert the reader that the word or phrase is a proper noun.

Punctuation

apostrophe

For plural nouns that don't already end in s, add an apostrophe and an s ('s) to the end of the word. For nouns (singular or plural) that already end in s, just add an apostrophe.

Here are some examples:

1. Jesus' words
2. Arkansas' legislature
3. The witness' testimony
4. Many businesses' services

colon

In a sentence, capitalize the first word after the colon if what follows the colon could function alone as a complete sentence. Use a single space following the colon. Place colons outside quotation marks when used together.

Here are some examples:

1. This is it: the chance we've been waiting for!
2. This is it: We'll never have to work again!
3. I feel sad when I hear the ending to "The Road Not Taken": "And that has made all the difference."

comma

In a series consisting of three or more elements, separate the elements with commas. When a conjunction (like, and, or or) joins the last two elements in a series, include a comma before the conjunction.

Here are some examples:

1. He went to Dewey, Cheatem, and Howe for financial advice.

When using an ampersand in place of and in a series (acceptable only in company names and when space is severely limited, as in a headline), do not insert a comma before it. The combination of comma and ampersand creates visual clutter.

1. He went to Dewey, Cheatem & Howe for financial advice.

hyphen

A hyphen is used to mean to, up to and including, or through in a range of numbers, dates, game scores, pages, and so on. It is also used to construct a compound adjective that includes a proper noun of more than one word. (New York, Queen Elizabeth, Lake Baikal, and World War II are all multiword proper nouns.)

If you are unsure whether a word combination should be two words, two hyphenated words, or one compound word, check the online Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

1. Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) was president during the American Civil War (1861-1865).
2. Jim was interested in the pre-Civil War era. (En dash connecting two-word proper noun “Civil War” with prefix “pre-”)

em dash

Use an em dash to set apart entire phrases from the main body of a sentence, and separate the dashes from the words that precede and follow it with a space. When a date range has no ending date, use an em dash instead.

1. The last place she expected to find him -- if she ever found him at all -- was in the back seat of her car.
2. Mick Jagger (1943—), Brian Jones (1942-1969), and Keith Richards (1943—) were among the band’s original members.

Numbers in Titles

Use numerals for cardinal and ordinal numbers in headlines, email subject lines, and HTML page titles.

1. In Pamplona, 8 Injured in “Running of the Bulls” (Headline)
2. Subject: Presentation file 1 of 2 attached (Email subject line)
3. 5th Grader Wins 1st Place in Spelling Bee (Headline)

cardinal numbers

Spell out cardinal numbers (*one, two, and so on*) and ordinal numbers (*first, second, and so on*) below 10, but use numerals for numbers 10 and above.

percentages

When expressing percentages, always use numerals and the percentage sign. Do not spell out percentages.

time

Always use a.m. and p.m. for indicating time. Use Eastern Standard Time (EST) when observing standard time (winter), and Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) when observing daylight saving time (summer).

Some examples include:

1. Read reviews of more than 350 restaurants in your city.
2. Aunt Bea’s pickles won first place at the fair.
3. With a premium license, install the software on three computers.
4. Does your building have a 13th floor?
5. The study revealed that 8% of respondents were ambivalent.
6. The webinar will be held on Friday, August 27 at 4 p.m. EDT .

numerals as coordinates

Use numerals when referring to numbers that a person must type, such as for coordinates in tables and worksheets, and for parts of a document, such as page numbers or line references.

1. Type 5 and press Enter.
2. Select row 3, column 5 of the worksheet.
3. Refer to line 9 of the transcript.

numerals in categories

If a passage contains two or more numbers that refer to the same category of information and one is 10 or higher, use numerals for all numbers referring to that category. When numbers are treated consistently, readers can recognize the relationship between them more easily.

1. The delegation included 3 women and 11 men.
2. He was the 9th person chosen for the 10-person team.
3. The most popular vote-getters included three women and nine men.
4. Only 3 women and 11 men attended the four-day event.

large numbers

Express large and very large numbers in numerals followed by million, billion, and so forth. If expressing a number greater than 999 in numerals, use a comma.

1. 5 billion people
2. 1,200 years ago
3. Millions and billions

When stating *million* or *billion* with a numeral, don’t hyphenate, even before a noun. But do use a hyphen between the numeral and million or billion if the expression is part of a compound adjective that takes a hyphen elsewhere.

1. A \$6 million lawsuit
2. The 400-million-served mark

If space is tight (for example, in headlines, tables, diagrams, or text messages), some abbreviations are acceptable.

1. mil (million). See “mil.”
2. bil (billion). See “bil.”
3. K (thousand) - *Among other things, K can stand for thousand, kilobytes, kilobits, and kilograms. Use K only if its meaning is clear from the context.*

at the beginning of a sentence

Avoid starting a sentence with a numeral. If you can't avoid it, spell out the number.

Not - 450 gamers participated in last night's chat.

But - Four hundred and fifty gamers participated in last night's chat.

Or - Last night, 450 gamers participated in the chat.

A year may be written in numerals at the beginning of a sentence. It's okay to start a headline with a numeral if space is tight or if the numeral makes the headline more eye-catching or easier to scan or understand.

1. 1967 was the Summer of Love in San Francisco.
2. 8 Diet Tips
3. Two 5-Year-Old Boys Found; One Still Missing

ordinals and suffixes

Avoid expressing ordinals with superscript letters (such as *10th*, *11th*, and so on). Ordinals with superscript formatted in a word processor may not display correctly in some places, such as email, and the use in writing of these suffixes is becoming increasingly archaic. Do not use “th” endings or their equivalent when stating dates (i.e., do not write *Join us on June 10th*).

Attribution

It's important to properly cite sources in all publications, whether online, printed, or projected. If you've got a case not covered here, find a way to attribute your source that seems appropriate to the medium. Choosing not to cite your source is an unacceptable alternative.

link attribution

When including links in external content such as blog posts and ebooks, use anchor text when possible. Linking to other articles and websites is a best practice.

image attribution

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