

## RETHINKING SCHOOLS PROOFREADING AND STYLE SHEET (November 2002)

In general, *Rethinking Schools* follows *The Associated Press Stylebook* in questions of style, spelling, and punctuation. For questions that are not answered by this stylesheet or in the AP Stylebook, refer to *Webster's New Word College Dictionary, Fourth Edition*.

### Basic Procedure

When editing hard copies, we use standard copy-editing marks for marking errors. Editing marks are made with a red pen. In addition to marking the error in the text, a **dark** line or dash should be placed to the left of the line in which the error appears so that the correction can easily be found again.

### Addresses, Phone Numbers, etc.

- Telephone and fax numbers should include the area code. The three parts of the number should be separated by hyphens: 414-964-9646.

- When giving the **complete address** of a person or organization, use the following format, including the two-letter U.S. Post Office abbreviations for state names:

Organization/Name, street address, city, state 12345. Phone number

*For more information, contact FairTest, 342 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02139. 617-466-0864.*

- Following are the Post Office abbreviations for all states:

AL	HI	MA	NM	SD
AK	ID	MI	NY	TN
AZ	IL	MN	NC	TX
AR	IN	MS	ND	UT
CA	IA	MO	OH	VT
CO	KS	MT	OK	VA
CT	KY	NE	OR	WA
DE	LA	NV	PA	WV
FL	ME	NH	RI	WI
GA	MD	NJ	SC	WY

- **Within the text of an article**, if **only** the state is mentioned, spell out the state's name completely:

*According to FairTest, a Massachusetts-based testing reform organization, the ACT demonstrates class bias.*

- If, **within an article**, the city **and** state are mentioned, abbreviate the state name according to AP guidelines; use a period, and set the state off with commas:

*According to FairTest, a Cambridge, Mass., testing reform organization ...  
He traveled from Nashville, Tenn., to Austin, Texas, en route to Albuquerque, N.M.*

- Eight state names are not abbreviated under AP guidelines. Following are those states and the AP abbreviations for the others:

Ala.	La.	Ohio
Alaska	Maine	Okla.
Ariz.	Md.	Ore.
Ark.	Mass.	Penn.
Calif.	Mich.	R.I.
Colo.	Minn.	S.C.
Conn.	Miss.	S.D.
Del.	Mo.	Tenn.
Fla.	Mont.	Texas
Ga.	Neb.	Utah
Hawaii	Nev.	Vt.
Idaho	N.H.	Va.
Ill.	N.J.	Wash.
Ind.	N.M.	W.Va.
Iowa	N.Y.	Wis.
Kan.	N.C.	Wyo.
Ky.	N.D.	

## Abbreviations

- Always put spaces between initials in a name:  
*W. E. B. Dubois*    *E. D. Hirsch*
- Do not put spaces in U.S. or U.N.  
*a U.N. committee* (but *at the United Nations*)  
*U.S. teachers* (but *teachers in the United States*)
- The following do not have periods:  
*IQ*        *TV*

## Bibliographic Style

(for footnotes, works cited, etc.)

- Use the following format:  
Author's last name, first name, *Title in Italics* (City: publisher, year), p. xx. No indent before author's name. Leave a space between selections. For example:  
Harvey, Jeremy; Miner, Barbara; and Rose, Sarah, *Preoccupations: Selected Stories, 1998-2006* (New York: Faber and Faber, 2008), pp. 78-91.

## Bullets

- Bullets (•) should be followed by a single space and the text which follows should begin with a capital letter and end with a period, even if the text is not a complete sentence.

*Students in higher tracks receive certain advantages, including:*

- *Highly qualified teachers.*
- *Access to higher-level skills, such as critical thinking.*
- *Active support from parent groups.*

## Commas

- Use commas to separate elements in a series and place a comma before a conjunction in a series (this is a deviation from AP):

*The flag was red, white, and blue.*

*She must choose from door one, two, or three.*

- Use a comma to separate a series of adjectives equal in rank, that is, if “and” could replace the comma with no change in meaning:

*a thoughtful, precise manner*

- No comma is used when the last adjective before a noun outranks its predecessors because it is an integral part of the noun phrase:

*a cheap fur coat*

- Commas should be used to set off non-essential clauses and phrases (a non-essential clause or phrase is one whose omission would not change the basic meaning of the sentence):

*Indian corn, or maize, was harvested.* (omission of the phrase “or maize” would not alter the meaning of the sentence)

- Use commas to set off a person’s age or hometown:

*Maude Findlay, 48, was present.*

*Maude Findlay, Tuckahoe, N.Y., was present.*

- In cases where a comma is optional, the author’s preference should take precedence.

## Dates

- When a month is used with a specific date, abbreviate only Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., and Dec.

*The bill was passed Feb. 23 with a two-to-one margin.*

*The bill was passed Feb. 23, 1989, with a two-to-one margin.*

- The year is always set off by commas when the month, day, and year are included.

- **If the month stands alone or with only the year**, spell out the full name of the month:

*The bill was passed in February with a two-to-one margin.*

*The bill was passed in February 1998 with a two-to-one margin.*

## Gender

- In order to make pronoun usage both consistent and inclusive of men and women, use the plural pronoun when possible:

preferred: *Students who improve their work should be praised.*

acceptable: *A student who improves his or her work should be praised.*

- *They* and *their* should never be used as singular pronouns:  
*A student who improves their work should be praised.* (wrong!)

## Hyphens

- Use a hyphen to link all the words in a compound modifier (two or more words which express a single concept) that precedes a noun:

*social-justice unionism*

*a third-grade student*

*a middle-school social-studies teacher*

*low- and middle-income families*

- Do not use a hyphen to link *very* or adverbs that end in *-ly* to other words of a compound modifier:

*an easily remembered rule*

*a very good time*

- A compound modifier immediately following a form of the verb *to be* is usually hyphenated:

*She is Asian-American.*

But: *She is an Asian American.* (no hyphen)

And: *They are in third grade.*

- A hyphen should separate two-thought compounds:

*serio-comic*     *socio-economic*

- Use hyphens to avoid duplicated vowels and tripled consonants:

*pre-empted*     *shell-like*

- Parenthetical phrases should be set off by a solid, long dash (—) rather than two hyphens.

## Names, Position Titles, and Organizations

- Be certain that all position titles and names of people and organizations are spelled correctly and are accurate.
- Of special concern is the use of the correct and full title of persons mentioned (for example, *executive director* or *Vice President for Academic Affairs*), rather than a more generic title such as *head of*.
- Use the full name of an organization in the first mention. Acronyms and shortened names are acceptable for later mentions:  
First mention: *Network of Educators on the Americas (NECA)*  
Second mention: *NECA*

## Numbers — Cardinal

- Spell out whole numbers below 10. For 10 and above, use figures. But never spell out ages or percentages.  
*He taught at Riverside for four years.*  
*His daughter is 4 years old.*  
*7 percent of students*
- In hyphenated modifiers, spell out cardinal numbers below 10:  
*two-part program*  
*a 10-year prison sentence*  
exception: *a 5-year-old child*
- If a sentence must begin with a number, spell it out. The exception is a sentence that begins with a year:  
*1993 brought us the beginning of the Clinton Administration.*

## Numbers — Ordinal

- Spell out ordinal numbers below 10th. For 10th and above use ordinal figures:  
*He was 15 when he reached the 10th grade.*
- In hyphenated modifiers, spell out ordinal numbers below 10th:  
*second-rate work*  
*The test is administered to fourth-, eighth-, and 12th-grade students.*
- Use figures when ordinal numbers are used to create names. This rule applies primarily to political, geographic, and military names:  
*the 3rd Aldermanic District*  
*1st Sgt. Jane Smith*
- In a series of numbers, apply the appropriate guidelines:  
*They sold four four-room houses, 10 six-room houses, and 12 10-room houses.*

## Numbers in Headlines

- Use figures for all ordinal and cardinal numbers in headlines.
- Spell out *one* when it is used as a pronoun in headlines.

## Quotations

- Commas and periods always go inside quotation marks. Dashes, semicolons, and exclamation and question marks go outside when they apply to the whole sentence, inside when they apply to the quote only:

*The administrator said the situation is “very grave.”*

*How can she say the killing was “just an accident”?*

*All three of them said, “What?”*

- Alternate between double and single quotation marks when using quotes within quotes, beginning with double marks:

*She said, “He described the broad cuts as ‘shared sacrifice,’ though the upper class may disagree.”*

- In dialogue, each person’s words, no matter how brief, are placed in a separate paragraph and enclosed in quotation marks:

*“The teachers and staff went on strike.”*

*“Why?”*

*“They were tired of bad cafeteria food.”*

- In headlines and quote pullouts, use single quotation marks rather than double:

*AFT Calls for ‘Traditional’ Schools*

## Quotes and Statistics

- All quotes and statistics must be attributed to someone or some source and the attribution must be complete and accurate (see **Names, Position Titles, and Organizations**).

### Race and Ethnicity

- Capitalize *Black*, *Hispanic*, and *Latino* when they are used to describe a person’s race.

- Do not capitalize *white*.

- When possible, use *Latino* rather than *Hispanic* and *students of color* rather than *minority students*.

- When used as a noun, *African American* is not hyphenated. When used as an adjective, it is hyphenated. This rule also applies to other ethnic groups.

## Resources Style

- Use the following format for publications:

**Title [title is in boldface]** , Author (City, State: Publisher, year). Telephone number. Pages. Price.

Do not indent before title. Leave a space between selections. For example:

**Assessing Student Learning: From Grading to Understanding**, ed. David Allen (New York: Teachers College Press, 1998). 800-575-6566. 218 pp. \$15.95 pb.

## Spacing

- Use a single space between sentences, after the punctuation mark. and after colons.

## Titles

- All principal words should be capitalized, including prepositions and conjunctions of four or more letters.
- Put titles of songs, articles, short stories, poems, television programs in quotation marks.
- Put titles of books, periodicals, works of art, movies in italicized type.

## Use of “-wide”

- Words that end with the suffix *wide* never get a hyphen.  
*citywide*   *districtwide*   *schoolwide*

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