



HOW TO BE AN AP STYLE ICON

AP Style comes with guidelines that differ from English class. It doesn't have to be confusing though. Keep an AP Stylebook handy, go to apstylebook.com and check out this cheat sheet poster for easy reference. Follow these rules, and you'll be on your way to being a legendary AP Style Icon.

CAPITALIZATION

Capitalize:

- **Clubs and organization names.** *Debate Team, French Club*
- **Athletic teams and mascots.** *The Hawks beat the Panthers 28-6 in overtime.*
- **Award titles.** *Mrs. Stephens was named Teacher of the Year.*
- **Proper course names,** but not the class subject. *Jake Rivers finished his Geometry homework early since math was his favorite class.*
- **Holidays.** *Thanksgiving, Easter, Labor Day*
- **Titles preceding a name,** but not following a name. *Principal John Matthews or John Matthews, principal*

DO NOT capitalize:

- **Classifications.** *Kayla Brooks is a sophomore.*
- **Seasons.** Use fall, winter, spring, summer.
- **Titles without names.** *The coach helped improve their record.*

PUNCTUATION

Commas:

- **DO NOT** use an Oxford comma before a conjunction in a list of items unless omitting it would make the meaning unclear. *I like apples, oranges, bananas and grapes.*
- **DO** use a comma after a city if the state follows. *Patrick Miller moved here from Cleveland, Ohio.*
- **DO** use a comma after a year if it follows a month and date within a sentence. *Our school opened on Aug. 21, 2018, after the city voted in 2015 to approve the construction.*
- **DO** use a comma in front of the end quotation mark of a quote. *"Quote," name said.*
- **DO** use a comma in numbers over 999. *There are 1,561 students at our school.*

Ellipsis. Treat as a separate word with spaces before and after.

FORMATTING

- **Attribution.** Always use "said" for attribution, not words like stated or yelled. *"Disney World is my favorite vacation spot," Payton Thomas said.*
- **Organization abbreviations.** Spell out an organization's full name on the first use, but abbreviate without periods for following uses if the meaning is clear. *The Future Farmers of America encouraged anyone interested in joining to visit the FFA booth at back-to-school registration.*
- **Time of day.** When denoting time, use lowercase with periods and no spaces. *Class starts at 8 a.m.*
- **Dates.** Abbreviate months when used with a specific date if the month is more than five letters long. *The plays on Feb. 28 and March 4 made February a busy month.*
- **Captions.** Captions should have the first sentence written in present tense and the following sentences written in past tense.
- **States.** Spell out state names in copy – this is an AP Stylebook rule update. *The robotics team traveled to Nashville, Tennessee, for nationals.*

NUMERALS

- **Spell out numbers one through nine; use numerals for numbers 10 or more.**
- **Spell out all numbers when a sentence starts with them, except for years.** *Thirty pages are due on the next yearbook deadline.*
- **Always use numerals for dates,** and do not use st, nd, rd or th after. Abbreviate months with more than five letters when used in conjunction with a date. *Grades will post on Dec. 1 and May 1 for all music classes.*
- **Never use the current year in a story.** It is assumed anything in that year's yearbook happened that year.
- **Percent.** Use the % symbol instead of spelling out percent – this is an AP Stylebook rule update. *Kendra Montgomery won the election for class president with 68% of the student body vote.*