

Boise State University Style Guide

Boise State University's Office of Communications and Marketing follows Associated Press guidelines in publications and websites except where indicated in this guide. Style questions about topics not included in this guide should be directed to the Office of Communications and Marketing at (208) 426-1577 or communications@boisestate.edu.

To order a desk copy of the "AP Stylebook," go to apstylebook.com.

abbreviations and acronyms

Acronyms are acceptable after full first reference. For acronyms of more than two letters, do not use periods. *The Economic Research Building (ERB) is located along University Drive next to the engineering complex.*

academic and administrative titles

- Lowercase titles when used after a name: *Stacy Pearson is vice president for finance and administration.*
- Uppercase official titles when used before a name: *College of Education Dean Diane Boothe will attend the conference.*
- Do not capitalize occupational titles and job descriptions, ie: *professor John Smith, assistant coach Mary Jones*. Exception: named and endowed chairs and professorships always are capitalized. *Greg Raymond, the Frank and Bethine Church Chair of Public Affairs, will speak at the conference.*
- Drop titles and first names on subsequent reference.

academic degrees

- Lowercase degrees if spelled out: *bachelor of arts, master of science, doctorate, doctor of education*. Do not follow this form with the word "degree." Use an apostrophe in the short form: *bachelor's degree, master's degree*.
- Try to avoid the abbreviations B.S., B.A., M.A., Ph.D. etc., in text, but if you must use the abbreviation, use a period for two-letter abbreviations and no period for three-letter abbreviations.

addresses

- Use the abbreviations Ave., Blvd. and St. only with a numbered address. Spell these words out and capitalize when part of a formal name or without an address. Lowercase and spell out when used alone or as with more than one street name. *The Idaho Capitol is located at 700 W. Jefferson St., between Sixth and Seventh streets.*
- Other street names (alley, drive, road, terrace, etc.) are spelled out, even with a numeric address. *The university's mailing address is 1910 University Drive.*

- Spell out streets using First through Ninth; use numeric figures for 10th and above.

accept/except

Accept means to receive. Except means to exclude.

admission

Use “admission” when referring to the application process or standards through the Office of “Admissions.”

ad nauseam

Not ad nauseum.

Adviser/advisor

Use advisor in all campus references. Use adviser when crafting a notice for the media as this conforms to AP style.

adjunct faculty

Lowercase. *Jack Smith is an adjunct instructor in the Department of Physics.*

affect/effect

Affect as a verb means to influence; avoid its use as a noun. Effect as a verb means to cause. Effect as a noun means result.

African American

Do not hyphenate as a noun or adjective, except in the name of a specific organization. Use “black” only when used in quotes or titles.

ages

Always use numeric figures. If expressed as an adjective before a noun, use hyphens. *The student is 16 years old. She was a 19-year-old freshman.* See also **numbers**.

albeit

Not all be it.

all right

Not alright.

alumni

- Alumni (plural), alumnae (plural female), alumna (female) and alumnus (male) are preferred. Alums is acceptable, but avoid alum.
- Commas set graduation years apart from names. *Philosophy major Buster Bronco, '10, was grand marshal for the Homecoming parade.*

a.m., p.m.

Lowercase, with periods. See also **time**.

among/between

- Use among with more than two people or items. *He was the most distinguished among the six candidates.*
- Use between with two people or items. *I have difficulty deciding between a peach and a nectarine.*

ampersands

Avoid ampersands. Use the word “and.”

ASBSU

Boise State’s student government organization is the Associated Students of Boise State University. ASBSU is acceptable on second reference or when the reference is clear.

athletics

- Use Department of Athletics, student athletics or Bronco athletics.
- Lowercase names of athletic programs and teams, such as women’s basketball, club sports or intermural sports.
- A team is singular, not plural. Noun-verb agreement should reflect that. *The team celebrated its second BCS Bowl victory with a public rally.*

awhile/a while

- Awhile means for a short period of time. *He waited awhile for her to notice him, and then he cleared his throat.*
- A while refers to a non-specific time period. *He planned to live in Alaska for a while after graduating with his master’s degree.*

barbecue

Not bar-b-que or BBQ.

board of directors

Do not capitalize.

Boise State University

Use Boise State on a second reference. Do not use BSU.

building names

- Academic and Career Services Building
- Administration Building
- Albertsons Library
- Allen Noble Hall of Fame
- Alumni Center
- Appleton Tennis Center
- Applied Technology Building
- Biology Greenhouse
- Boas Tennis and Soccer Center
- Brady Street Garage
- Bronco Stadium
- Capitol Village
- Caven-Williams Sports Complex
- Chaffee Hall
- Children's Center
- Christ Chapel
- Communication Building
- David S. Taylor Hall
- Driscoll Hall
- Education Building
- Engineering Building
- Environmental Research Building
- Extended Studies Center
- Facilities, Operations and Maintenance (Physical Plant)
- Gateway Center
- Harry Morrison Civil Engineering Building
- Health Center
- Health Sciences Riverside Building
- Heat Plant and Telephone Building
- Hemingway Western Studies Center
- Idaho Small Business Development Center (Idaho SBDC)
- Interactive Learning Center (ILC)
- John B. Barnes Towers
- John H. Keiser Hall
- Kinesiology Building
- Kinesiology Annex (pool)
- Liberal Arts Building
- Lincoln Hall
- Lincoln Avenue Garage
- Lincoln Townhouses
- Mathematics/Geosciences Building
- Mechanical Technology Building
- Micron Business and Economics Building
- Micron Engineering Center
- Morrison Hall
- Multipurpose Classroom Building
- Norco Building
- Public Affairs and Arts West Building (Campus School)
- Raptor Research Center
- Recreation (or Rec) Center
- Ron and Linda Yanke Family Research Park
- Science Nursing Building
- Simplot/Micron Building
- Special Events Center (SPEC)
- Student Success Center
- Student Union Building
- Stueckle Sky Center
- Taco Bell Arena
- TechHelp Building
- University Heights Apartments
- University Inn
- University Manor Apartments
- University Park Apartments
- University Security Building
- University Village Apartments
- Varsity Center

- Velma V. Morrison Center for the

Performing Arts

Buster Bronco

Boise State's mascot was inspired by the wild horses in the nearby Owyhee Canyonlands.

campaign

Boise State's first-ever comprehensive campaign *Destination Distinction: The Campaign for Boise State University* raised more than \$185 million and wrapped up in 2011.

campus

Lowercase. *Students return to the Boise State campus in late August.*

cannot

One word.

capitalization

- Capitalize all proper names, trade names, brand names, government departments and agencies, associations, companies, clubs, religions, languages, nations, places and addresses.
- Capitalize words derived from a proper noun, such as Christian, Marxist, etc.
- The first word in a sentence always is capitalized, even if it normally is not. For instance, email, e.e. cummings, van Gogh, etc. all would be capitalized at the start of a sentence. Since this can look odd, try to recast the sentence.
- Do NOT capitalize "university" except when part of an official name. *Boise State University is Idaho's metropolitan university.*

catalog

Not catalogue.

cents

See "money"

century

Use numeric figures. Hyphenate only as an adjective. *Boise Junior College was established in the 20th century. It is now a 21st-century metropolitan research university.*

chair

Preferred title of the head of a department. Avoid chairperson. Lowercase.

class standing

Lowercase. *He is in his junior year. Students may apply for admission to the program at the end of their sophomore year.*

coed

Not co-ed.

college

Lowercase except when used as part of an official title:

- College of Arts and Sciences: Note that “Sciences” is plural. Do not use an ampersand. COAS on second reference.
- College of Business and Economics: COBE on second reference.
- College of Education: COE on second reference
- College of Engineering: COEN on second reference
- College of Health Sciences: Note that “Sciences” is plural. COHS on second reference.
- College of Social Sciences and Public Affairs: Note that “Sciences” is plural. SSPA on second reference.

commencement

Capitalize when referring to the official May or December ceremony. Lowercase in general reference. *Boise State’s Commencement will be held in Taco Bell Arena. The university holds commencement ceremonies twice a year.*

complement/compliment

- Compliment refers to the expression of praise or admiration. Complimentary is given for free.
- Complement refers to something that completes or perfects.

composition titles

Place books, movies, presentations, television episodes, etc. in quotations. Do not use quotations or italics for classical music titles identified by sequence, such as Beethoven’s Symphony No. 5 in C minor. Do not use quotation marks for the Bible, or titles of periodicals or reference works.

comprise

Comprises, not comprised of.

Wrong: *Including the Graduate College, Boise State is comprised of seven academic colleges.*
Right: *Including the Graduate College, Boise State comprises seven academic colleges.*

continual/continuous

Continual means habitual or recurring. Continuous means without interruption.

course titles

Capitalize official course titles in text, with no quotation marks. *This fall he is enrolled in Synchronic Methods in Anthropology.*

coursework

One word.

curriculum vitae

Do not italicize. Plural is curricula vitae. Also written as CV or CVs in the plural.

cyber

Lowercase.

dates

- When using a month and date together, abbreviate months in accordance with AP style: Jan., Feb., March, April, May, June, July, Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.
- Spell out the month when it is used alone or with a year but with no date attached. *Winter Commencement will be held in December. The book will be published in August 2012.*
- Do not use “st,” “nd,” or rd.” *The event is Sept. 1 on the Quad.*
- Use a comma after dates included with years. *Boise Junior College opened on Sept. 6, 1932, at St. Margaret’s Hall.*
- Include the year when the date is not implied.

days

Do not abbreviate days of the week.

dean

Capitalize when used as a formal title before a name. Lowercase in all other uses. *Following the luncheon, Dean Smith presented the award to six alumni; The award was presented by the dean of the college.*

dean’s list

Lowercase.

decades

Use numeric figures to indicate decades of history. When abbreviating, precede with an apostrophe. Form the plural with the letter “s” and no apostrophe. *He was born in the late '50s or early '60s.*

degrees

See **academic degrees**.

departments

Uppercase when using the formal title, as in the Department of History. Lowercase when used informally. *The project was sponsored by students in the chemistry department.* (Hint: informal names often begin with the subject)

disc, disk

Use “disc” for phonograph records, optical and laser devices (such as a compact disc). Use “disk” for computer and medical references (such as a slipped disk).

Dr.

Use only for M.D. and do not include both a degree and courtesy title. See also **titles**.

directions and regions

Lowercase north, east, southwest, etc., unless designating a region. *The area of Southwest Idaho lies directly north of Nevada. The event will take place on the east side of Bronco Stadium.*

dollars

See “money”

dorm

Use residence hall.

ensure/insure/assure

Ensure means to guarantee or make certain. To assure is to make confident. Use insure when referring to the commercial sense of the word, as in car insurance.

entitled

Use titled unless the meaning is to have the right to something. *His latest book was titled "I am the King." She is entitled to receive fair compensation for her time.*

event listings

Event listings on the university calendar (events.boisestate.edu) must include, in order: Title of event, time, date, place, cost and contact information. When appropriate, include parking information.

faculty

Plural except when used with "member." *Faculty are invited to enroll in the workshop. She is a faculty member in the Department of Accountancy.*

farther/further

Farther denotes physical distance. Further refers to an extension in time or degree.

federal

Lowercase unless part of a proper title.

fellow

Lowercase. Also fellowship, unless part of an official title.

feminine nouns

Avoid. Use comedian, actor, etc. for both men and women.

fewer/less

Use "fewer" to denote individual items, "less" to describe quantity. *Fewer than 10 students attended the rally. I had less than \$20 in my wallet.*

fieldwork

One word.

FOCUS on Boise State University magazine

FOCUS is acceptable on second reference. Lowercase the "m" in magazine.

Founders Leadership Society

No apostrophe.

fractions

Spell out fractions less than one (*one-fifth, two-thirds*). Use a decimal point for fractions greater than one (6.25).

fundraiser, fundraising

No hyphen.

grade point average

Lowercase, no hyphen. GPA is acceptable on a second reference or when the context is clear.

grades

Capitalize course grades. Use an apostrophe for the plural. *He received four A's and one B.*

groundbreaking

No hyphen.

health care

Two words.

Health Center

Formerly University Health Services, located on the first two floors of the Norco Building.

historic/historical

A historic event is one that stands out in history. An occurrence in the past is historical.

ID

Abbreviation for identification. No periods.

imply/infer

- You imply something through the words you speak or write.
- Others infer your meaning by reading your words.

in order to

Avoid this phrase. Use “to.” Wrong: *The orientation meeting was conducted in order to train the instructors.* Right: *The orientation meeting was conducted to train the instructors.*

Inc.

No comma. *Micron Technology Inc.*

initials

Do not use periods between initials in personal names. *JR Simplot.*

Internet terms

- BlackBerry
- blog
- Blu-ray
- CD-ROM
- cellphone
- cyber
- dot-com
- DVD
- email
- homepage
- http: (use only when needed for clarification)
- Internet
- iPod
- iTunes
- JPEG (or JPG)
- Facebook
- foursquare
- listserv
- log in (action), login (noun)
- MySpace
- the Net
- online
- PDF
- podcast
- portal
- smartphone
- Twitter
- videocast
- Wi-Fi
- website
- wiki
- World Wide Web
- YouTube

its/it's

- “Its,” without an apostrophe, refers to possession: *Its time had come.*
- “It’s,” with an apostrophe, is a contraction of “it is.” *It’s not without its benefits.*

The Juilliard School

Not Julliard.

kickoff (n.), kick-off (adj.), kick off (v.)

lay/lie

- Lay is an action word with a direct object. Past tense is laid. Present is laying. *Tell him to lay the book on the table. He laid the book on the table. He is laying the book on the table.*
- Lie is a state of reclining with no direct object. Past tense is lay, past participle is lain. Present is lying. *Being tired, he wanted to lie down. So he lay down on the bed. He awoke after he had lain there for an hour.*

- When making an untrue statement, use lie, lied and lying.

legislative titles

On first reference, use (U.S. or Idaho) Rep. or Sen. before the name. Spell out and lowercase *representative* and *senator* in text.

legislature

Capitalize when specifically referring to a state's legislature and in subsequent specific references: *the Idaho Legislature*; *the state Legislature*. Lowercase when used in a generic sense: *The legislature is the law-making body of government*.

listserv

Lowercase, with no "e" on the end.

log in

A login (noun, one word) is used to log in (verb, two words) to the Internet.

long

No hyphens. Examples include *daylong*, *weeklong* and *semesterlong*.

majors

Lowercase except for majors that are proper nouns, such as English. *His major is computer science*. *She is an English major*.

measurements

Use numeric figures for measurements, spelling out feet, inches, etc. *The board is 4 feet, 6 inches long*; *He walked 3 miles to school each day*.

minuscule

Not miniscule.

money

- Use a dollar sign and omit ".00." Do not write out "dollar." *The campaign goal is \$175 million*.
- For amounts under \$1, use numerals and "cents": *The candy bar cost 49 cents*.
- Spell out casual phrases: *I can think of a million reasons not to do that*. *She borrowed five bucks*.

more than

Always use “more than” instead of “over” when referring to quantity. *Boise State offers more than 200 areas of interest.*

Mormon

Nickname for members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Note the “d” in day is lowercase.

Mountain West Conference

Boise State athletics joined this conference July 1, 2011. Mountain West Conference is used for first reference only, followed by Mountain West. MW is the acceptable acronym.

name suffixes

Do not use commas before Jr., Sr., II, III, etc. *The Martin Luther King Jr. Human Rights Celebration is in January.*

Native American

Capitalize “Native,” no hyphen.

non-English words and phrases

Italicize all non-English words, with the exception of alumni, alumnae, alumnus and alumna. *summa cum laude, café au lait.*

numbers

- Follow AP style. Write numbers one through nine and use numeric figures for numbers 10 and greater. Exceptions are ages and measurements. *Her two daughters are 1 month old and 3 years old. He is 6 feet 2 inches tall.*
- Do not begin a sentence with a numeral, except for a year: *2009 was a banner year. Twenty students participated in the program.*
- Use “No.” to indicate position or rank: *He was the No. 2 choice for the job. The song is No. 1 on the charts.*

OK

Not okay or O.K.

PDF

Capitalize all letters unless appended to a file name. *The report is available as a PDF.*

percentages

Spell out “percent” in text; use the percent symbol (%) in tables and graphics. *The class was at 95 percent capacity.*

president, vice president, governor, etc.

Capitalize executive titles when used as part of a person’s official title, lowercase otherwise. *President Bob Kustra met with Gov. C.L. “Butch” Otter before the press conference. Both the president and the governor provided comments to the media following the event.*

preventive

Avoid using preventative.

programs

Lowercase except for formal program names.

punctuation

- Use a colon when introducing lists. Do not capitalize the first letter of a sentence that follows a colon unless it is a quote.
- Use a dash (—) with a space on either side to indicate an abrupt change in thought or to set off text. *The groom — a bundle of nerves wrapped in a tuxedo — awaited his bride at the altar.*
- Use an ellipsis (a series of three periods with a space on either side) to indicate an omission from a text or quotation. One can be used at the beginning, inside or at the end of a sentence.
- Avoid exclamation points except when part of a quotation.
- Place a period or comma inside quotation marks. Place a question mark, dash or semicolon outside quotation marks except when they apply to the quoted matter (as in dialogue). *“I am appalled,” she said. “Do you think it’s fair to sum this up by saying “All’s well that ends well”?”*
- Use double quotes to indicate a title within a story, single quotes in a story title or headline, or within a quote. *The book is titled “The Thing I Love to Hate.” “I love reading ‘Gone With the Wind’ when I am in Atlanta,” she exclaimed.*

residence hall

Not dorm or dormitory.

room numbers

Capitalize. *The lecture is in ILC Room 403.*

seasons

Lowercase except as part of a title. *Students soon will be returning for fall semester. Each spring, students sponsor the popular Spring Fling event.*

School of Social Work

This is a “School,” not a “Department.”

serial comma

Do not use a serial comma before the last “and” or “or” in a list, except for clarity. *I like bacon, eggs and toast for breakfast. His favorite sandwiches include peanut butter, ham and cheese, and tuna fish.* Also called an Oxford comma.

sign up (v.), sign-up (n.)

service-learning

Hyphenate. Capitalize only when referring specifically to the Service-Learning Program.

spaces

Use only one space after periods, commas or colons.

staff

Plural. *Staff have indicated they prefer receiving news in an electronic format.*

state abbreviations

Spell out the full name of the state when using alone. Follow AP style when abbreviating state names coupled with a city. Spell out the following: Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas, Utah, District of Columbia (except when writing Washington, D.C.). Omit “Idaho” when referring to cities within the state. Use the following abbreviations:

- Ala.
- Ariz.
- Ark.
- Calif.
- Colo.
- Conn.
- Del.
- Fla.
- Ga.
- Ill.
- Ind.
- Kan.
- Ky.
- La.
- Md.
- Mass.
- Mich.
- Minn.
- Miss.
- Mo.
- Mont.
- Neb.
- Nev.
- N.H.
- N.J.
- N.M.
- N.Y.
- N.C.
- N.D.
- Okla.
- Ore.
- Pa.
- R.I.
- S.C.
- S.D.
- Tenn.

- Vt.
- Va.
- Wash.
- W.Va.
- Wis.
- Wyo.

Use standard postal code abbreviations when writing addresses. **See also addresses.**

strategic plan

Boise State’s strategic plan is titled: “Charting the Course: A Strategic Vision for Boise State University.” Use “Charting the Course” on subsequent reference.

study abroad

Lowercase.

telephone numbers

Use parentheses for the area code: *(208) 426-1000*. Add the “1” for toll-free numbers and use hyphens: *1-800-824-7017*. When including an extension, use lowercase: *ext. 6-1122*.

that/which

- “Which,” used to identify a nonessential clause, is preceded by a comma. *Watermelon, which can be purchased cheaply in season, makes a great summer side dish.*
- “That,” used to identify an essential clause, is not preceded by a comma. *The bridge that crosses over the river behind the library is known as the Friendship Bridge.*

that/who

- “That” refers to objects and animals without a name.
- “Who” refers to people and animals with a name.

theater/theatre

Spelled “theater” unless part of a facility title or when referring to the Department of Theatre Arts.

through/thru/threw

- Use “through” and not “thru.”
- Threw is the past tense of throw.

time

- Avoid “o’clock.” *The event is from 7-9 p.m.*
- Avoid redundancy, such as 10 a.m. in the morning or 12 midnight.
- Avoid 12 p.m. or 12 a.m. Use noon or midnight.

- Use a colon to separate the hour from the minutes. *12:30 p.m.*
- Place time before date and place: *The concert is at 6 p.m. June 24 in the Morrison Center.*

titles

- Only use courtesy titles for members of the military, when appropriate, or religious figures (Fr., Sr.). Do not use Dr. except for those who have earned an M.D. and only on a first reference. Do not use Dr. and M.D. together: *Dr. Clark is a surgeon* or *Matthew Clark, M.D., is a surgeon.*
- Never use courtesy titles such as Mr., Mrs., Ms.

See also **academic titles**.

toward

Not towards.

T-shirt

Hyphenate and use a capital “T.”

TV

Acceptable as an abbreviated form of television.

United States

Except in program titles, use United States on first reference, U.S. on subsequent references. Do not use periods when writing USA.

university

Lowercase except as part of a school’s title. *Boise State University is Idaho’s metropolitan university.*

University Health and Recreation

This department encompasses Counseling Services, Medical Services, Wellness Services and Recreation Services (formerly Campus Recreation).

versus

In text, write out “versus.” In court cases or sports schedules, use “v.” *Boise State v. Virginia Tech.*

Washington, D.C.

Use periods with “D.C.” and set off with commas. *The nation’s capitol in Washington, D.C., is located on the mall.*

web addresses

- No http:// is necessary. *www.boisestate.edu*
- Omitting the “www” is acceptable except when needed for clarity.
- When possible, use a shorter address and give additional directions: *Visit admissions.boisestate.edu and click on “Apply” for more information.*
- Periods should be used at the end of every sentence, even if that sentence ends in a web address.

who/whom

Who refers to the subject of a clause and whom refers to the object of a clause. To remember which is which, rephrase the question using either “he” or “him.” When “he” works, use “who.” *Who spilled the milk?/He spilled the milk.* When “him” works, use “whom.” *To whom should I address the envelope?/Address the envelope to him.*

who’s/whose

Who’s is a contraction of who is. Whose is possessive. *Who’s going to tell me whose books these are?*

wide

No hyphens. Examples include *campuswide, collegewide, nationwide.*

Proofreading tips:

- Always have someone else read your work.
- Read your work out loud and backward.
- Leave time for proofreading.
- Always proof a printed copy and not an online version.

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