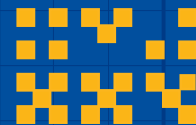


# Writing Style Manual

REVISED 2025 EDITION



University of  
Pittsburgh®





## The University's Writing Style: An Important Part of Its Identity

The University of Pittsburgh reaches out to many audiences through its publications and its websites. While each of the University's schools, colleges, departments, and academic and administrative units has its own special strengths and its own stories to tell, each is part of the same institution. The use of a clear, consistent writing style for all print materials and websites produced by and for the University of Pittsburgh reinforces this fact and, just like a conscientiously applied graphic style or identity, helps to present the University to its audiences in a consistent and professional manner, making use of the highest standards of written English language expression.

The University of Pittsburgh is a member of the prestigious [Association of American Universities](#) (AAU), a consortium of top North American research institutions. When the process of creating this style manual was initiated, many AAU members were using The Chicago Manual of Style, considered a highly authoritative reference in publishing and academia, as the basis for their own writing styles. In June 2003, the University of Pittsburgh adopted style guidelines based on, but not identical to, those in The Chicago Manual of Style, 14th Edition, as part of its institutional identity program. In 2007, following the release of 15th edition of The Chicago Manual of Style, these guidelines were updated.

In the past several years, however, there has increasingly been a blurring of the lines between journalism and marketing communications, both in the world at large and at Pitt.

In an effort to better reflect how language is actually being used within the University community and among our higher education peers, this revised edition of the University of Pittsburgh Writing Style Manual has been revised to more closely align with the recommendations outlined in the Associated Press Stylebook. Because this reference does not address all style questions that may be raised in an academic environment, we continue to recommend that users refer to The Chicago Manual of Style, 17th Edition, for matters of style and usage not addressed in the Associated Press Stylebook or in this style manual.

This style manual is a comprehensive road map to the style guidelines adopted by the University of Pittsburgh. Within these guidelines are exceptions to and clarifications of style conventions listed in the Associated Press Stylebook and The Chicago Manual of Style that are common to written communications at Pitt. It has been prepared for the use of all who write University promotional materials (brochures, magazines, newsletters, flyers, posters, etc.) and for websites that will carry the University's name.

In addition to serving as the basis for a consistent writing style, this manual also provides a handy reference guide to some common spellings, abbreviations and punctuation. For general matters of spelling, the recommended dictionary is the [Merriam-Webster online dictionary](#). If two or more accepted spellings are given, the first is the one preferred for University publications.

Any questions about University of Pittsburgh writing style or this manual should be directed to the Office of University Communications and Marketing.

## Top Tips for Good Writing

### The Basics

1. The University of Pittsburgh, Pitt and the University are the **only acceptable references** to this institution.
2. **Check your facts.** Sometimes we assume things that we don't really know, and it can be embarrassing. Check all proper nouns (names of people, places and events), numbers (dates, years and phone numbers), and people's titles, and generally check that what you're writing is true. When checking your facts, make sure the sources you using are credible and up to date, especially websites.
3. Writing style should **be consistent**—always—throughout a story, throughout a magazine, throughout a series. Instances of inconsistency can look like mistakes.
4. When writing out **a Pitt address**, the first line is always University of Pittsburgh. The next line is the school, then the department and then a person's name (if the mail is going to someone specific). Then write the office number and building. Finally, write the street address and the city, state and zip code. See the Addresses section for details.
5. **Don't rely on spell check!** One letter can make the difference between the word you want and an embarrassing mistake. Spell check will not flag a misspelled word if your misspelling is another (correctly spelled) word. Check your spelling, and consider asking your colleagues to proofread your writing.

6. **To capitalize or not to capitalize?** That is often the question. Capitalizing a word because it is important may not be the correct thing to do. For everything you ever wanted to know about capitalization, see the Capitalization section of this manual.
7. Old habits are hard to break, but let's break this one. In the word-processing age, we use only **one space after a period or a colon**. The convention of using two spaces between sentences and after a colon is a holdover from the typewriter age, and it went out with carbon paper.
8. Learn the proper way to **refer to degrees**.  
**These are right:**  
Bachelor of Science, bachelor's degree, BS  
Master of Arts, master's degree, MA  
Doctor of Philosophy, doctorate, PhD  
**These are wrong:**  
Bachelor's of Science, Bachelors Degree, B.S.

### The Finer Points

9. Don't leave **the rules of grammar** back in grade school. Subject-verb agreement is an important rule, and so is subject-pronoun agreement. Beware of collective nouns, and pay attention to subjects, verbs and pronouns, as these kinds of errors are both embarrassing and common. In addition, watch out for proper usage of gerunds, which are the -ing forms of verbs used as nouns. If the gerund is to be modified by a noun or pronoun, the noun or pronoun must be in the possessive case. Also, avoid superfluous prepositions. Finally, avoid dangling modifiers, which are phrases or clauses—usually introductory phrases or clauses—that modify the wrong word, resulting in an illogical statement.

10. **The law affects our writing.** At Pitt, the full names of the Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business, Swanson School of Engineering and Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences must be used in the first and most prominent references in a publication. That stipulation is in the contract between the University and the donors. Court rulings about affirmative action programs at the University of Michigan have altered the way we describe outreach to disadvantaged and underrepresented student populations. We also must be careful not to libel or defame people in our writing. **The Associated Press Stylebook** includes an excellent summary of libel law.
11. See [Appendix 1](#) for a list of **commonly misused words** and how to use them properly. Your boss might even compliment you on how you've complemented your professional development with this style manual!
12. **Watch your words.** To show sensitivity to the rich variety of ethnicities, races, religions and other aspects of individuals' identities, we must respect cultural, personal and religious differences. Don't mention ethnic, racial or other individual characteristics unless they are pertinent and their relevance is clear to the reader. If an attribute is relevant and you're writing about a specific person, find out the term the person prefers. Avoid using gender-specific words such as chairman, mailman and fireman when you can easily substitute words such as chair, letter carrier and firefighter. Also, use the terms winter recess and holiday party rather than Christmas break and Christmas party, as not everyone celebrates the same holidays.

### Making It Sing

13. **Don't lean on jargon!** We want people to understand the great work that is being done at the University of Pittsburgh and by its alumni, so explain it in simple, everyday English. Jargon includes any words, phrases and descriptions used by members of a discipline to describe their work to other people in the same field, and we must avoid it when we write for external audiences.
14. **Keep your writing active** whenever possible, including in headlines. All sentences have subjects, objects and verbs. When the subject of a sentence performs an action, the sentence is written in active voice. When the subject is being acted upon, the sentence is written in passive voice. Using passive voice makes writing harder to understand.
15. **Humor is a matter of personal taste**, and wordplay, sarcasm, exaggeration and other devices should be used with great care. Consider the context of what you're writing; a document that's the official voice of University policy requires a different tone than an email to colleagues or friends. When in doubt, leave it out.

# Table of Contents

**ABBREVIATIONS** ..... 7

- 1. Streets, avenues, roads, boulevards
- 2. Days of the week
- 3. Months of the year
- 4. Acronyms
- 5. City and state
- 6. Beginning a sentence

**ACADEMIC CALENDAR/TERMS** ..... 7

**AD/CE** ..... 7

**ADDRESSES** ..... 7

- 1. Addresses in copy
- 2. Full mailing addresses
- 3. Separating elements with commas

**ADVISOR** ..... 7

**AFRICAN AMERICAN** ..... 7

**AGE** ..... 7

**ALUMNA, ALUMNUS, ALUMNAE, ALUMNI** ..... 7

**AMPERSAND** ..... 8

**APOSTROPHE** ..... 8

- 1. Plurals of figures, years or abbreviations
- 2. Plurals of letters and academic grades
- 3. Possessives of abbreviations
- 4. Degrees
- 5. Year of graduation

**ART** ..... 8

**ARTICLES (IN NEWSPAPERS, MAGAZINES, JOURNALS, ETC.)** ..... 8

**AVENUE** ..... 8

**AWARDS, PRIZES** ..... 8

**BC/BCE** ..... 8

**BLACK** ..... 8

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES** ..... 8

**BOOKS, BOOK CHAPTERS** ..... 8

**BUILDINGS** ..... 9

**CAMPUSES** ..... 9

**CANNOT** ..... 9

**CAPITALIZATION** ..... 9

- 1. Hyphenated compounds
- 2. Parts of the world and regions of a country
- 3. Compass directions
- 4. Seasons
- 5. Legislative, executive and administrative bodies
- 6. Corporate, professional and governmental titles before a name
- 7. Nonspecific noun and adjective references
- 8. Political organizations, members
- 9. Political and economic systems
- 10. Numerical designation of historical time periods in a proper name
- 11. Nouns in major reference headings
- 12. Nouns in minor reference headings
- 13. Genus names

- 14. Geological eras, periods, epochs and strata
- 15. Titles of newspapers, magazines, journals, websites and religious texts
- 16. Titles of books, book chapters, poems, short stories, essays, plays, movies, pamphlets, CDs, long musical compositions, radio and TV programs, lectures, dissertations, articles, and works of art
- 17. Titles of book sections
- 18. Philosophical, literary, musical and artistic movements, styles and schools from proper nouns
- 19. Acronyms

**CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY** .... 10

**CATHEDRAL OF LEARNING** ..... 10

**CD** ..... 10

**CE** ..... 10

**CENTERS, INSTITUTES, LABORATORIES** ..... 10

**CENTS** ..... 10

**CENTURY** ..... 10

**CHANCELLOR** ..... 11

**CHAPTERS (OF BOOKS)** ..... 11

**CITY OF PITTSBURGH** ..... 11

**CLASS** ..... 11

**COLLECTIVE NOUNS** ..... 11

**COLONS** ..... 11

- 1. Capitalization of first word after colon
- 2. Colons in titles

3. Colons with quotations marks and parentheses
4. Space after colons

## **COMMAS ..... 11**

1. In a series
2. With Jr., Sr. or numerals in a name
3. Nonessential/nonrestrictive clauses
4. Essential/restrictive clauses
5. Between two adjectives

## **COMMONLY MISUSED WORDS ..... 11**

## **COMMENCEMENT ..... 11**

## **COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA ..... 11**

## **COMPANY NAMES ..... 11**

## **COMPUTER TERMINOLOGY ..... 12**

1. Terms
2. Email
3. Breaking website URLs on two or more lines
4. Web addresses at the end of sentences
5. Web addresses in text
6. Using http and www
7. Login/log in

## **CONFERENCES ..... 12**

## **COURSES, CLASSES, MAJORS ..... 12**

## **DASHES ..... 12**

1. Em dashes
2. Hyphens

## **DATES, YEARS ..... 12**

1. Days of the month
2. Commas with dates

3. BC/AD and BCE/CE
4. Inclusive years
5. Plurals of years
6. Referencing dates

## **DAYS ..... 13**

## **DEGREES (ACADEMIC) ..... 13**

1. Abbreviations
2. Doctorate
3. Honors
4. Certificates

## **DEGREES (TEMPERATURE) ..... 13**

## **DEPARTMENTS, OFFICES, PROGRAMS, SCHOOLS ..... 13**

1. Academic departments, offices, programs, schools
2. Named schools
3. Administrative departments and offices
4. Schools of the health sciences
5. University of Pittsburgh Police Department

## **DIRECTIONS ..... 14**

## **DISSERTATIONS ..... 14**

## **DOLLARS ..... 14**

## **ELLIPSES ..... 14**

1. Within quoted material
2. At the end of quoted material (full and incomplete sentences)
3. At the beginning of a sentence

## **EMAIL ..... 14**

## **ENDOWED CHAIRS, PROFESSORSHIPS ..... 14**

## **ETHNICITY AND RACE ..... 14**

## **FELLOWSHIPS, SCHOLARSHIPS ..... 14**

## **FORMS ..... 14**

## **FUNDRAISER/FUNDRAISING ..... 15**

## **GENDER SENSITIVITIES ..... 15**

1. Gender-specific terms
2. Preferred pronouns and they/them/their
3. Rewriting for unknown gender/ pronoun preference
4. Gender-inclusive language

## **GENUS NAMES ..... 15**

## **GRADES ..... 15**

## **GRANTS, GRANT PROPOSALS ..... 15**

## **HEALTH CARE ..... 15**

## **HEALTH SCIENCES ..... 15**

## **HOMECOMING ..... 15**

## **HOSPITALS ..... 15**

## **HYPHENS, COMPOUNDS ..... 15**

1. Two-word compound adjectives before a noun
2. Compound adjectives of three or more words before a noun
3. Compound adjectives after a noun
4. Adverbs ending in -ly before an adjective



5. Compound adjectives where the second word ends in -ed
6. Nouns that represent different and equally important functions
7. Prefixes
8. Self- and ex- compounds
9. Suffixes

## **INSTITUTES ..... 16**

## **JR., SR., NUMERALS IN A NAME .... 16**

## **LABORATORIES ..... 16**

## **LATIN TERMS ..... 16**

1. Latin terms in text
2. Emeritus, emerita, emeriti, emeritae
3. Resume, curriculum vitae, vita, CV
4. Plurals of Latin and Greek terms

## **LECTURES, LECTURE TITLES ..... 16**

## **LISTS ..... 16**

1. Simplicity and concision
2. Commas, semicolons and periods with complete sentences
3. Consistency in list items

## **MAGAZINES ..... 17**

## **MAJORS ..... 17**

## **MONEY ..... 17**

## **MONTHS ..... 17**

## **MUSICAL COMPOSITIONS AND TERMS ..... 17**

## **NEWSPAPERS ..... 17**

## **NON-ENGLISH WORDS AND PHRASES ..... 17**

## **NUMBERS ..... 17**

1. General rule
2. Beginning a sentence
3. Age
4. Percentages
5. Dollars and cents
6. Numerical amounts equal to or greater than 1 million
7. Temperature, degrees
8. Other exceptions
9. Use of numerals for the sake of consistency

## **OFFICES ..... 18**

## **ORGANIZATIONS ..... 18**

## **ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY, DEPARTMENT OF; ORTHOPAEDIC ..... 18**

## **PERCENT ..... 18**

## **PHONE NUMBERS ..... 18**

## **PITTSBURGHESE ..... 18**

## **PLURALS, POSSESSIVES ..... 18**

## **POEMS ..... 18**

## **POLICE ..... 18**

## **PREFIXES ..... 18**

## **PROFESSORSHIPS ..... 18**

## **PROVED/PROVEN ..... 18**

## **QUOTATION MARKS ..... 18**

1. Placing commas and periods
2. Placing colons and semicolons
3. Placing a question mark, exclamation point or dash
4. Single quotation marks for quotations within a quotation
5. Several paragraphs of a quotation
6. Topics of talks, papers or presentations

## **RACE ..... 19**

## **RADIO PROGRAMS ..... 19**

## **REFERENCING PEOPLE ..... 19**

## **REGIONAL CAMPUSES ..... 19**

## **ROAD ..... 19**

## **SCHOLARSHIPS ..... 19**

## **SCHOOLS ..... 19**

## **SEASONS ..... 19**

## **SEMICOLONS ..... 19**

1. General rule
2. In a series
3. With quotation marks and parentheses

## **SERIES ..... 19**

## **SOCIAL SECURITY ..... 19**

## **SONGS ..... 19**

## **SPACING ..... 19**

1. Between sentences in copy and after colons and semicolons
2. Abbreviations in names

<b>SPECIAL EVENTS</b>	19
<b>STREET</b>	20
<b>STUDENT TERMINOLOGY</b>	20
1. Academic years (first-year student, sophomore, graduate student, etc.)	
2. First-year and upper-division students	
3. Racial, linguistic, religious and other groups	
4. The word class when used with a year	
5. Officers of a class, social organization, etc.	
<b>TELEVISION PROGRAMS</b>	20
<b>TEMPERATURE</b>	20
<b>TERMS</b>	20
<b>TESTS</b>	20
<b>THAT/WHICH</b>	20
<b>THESES</b>	21
<b>TIMES</b>	21
1. Hours of the day, a.m. and p.m., noon and midnight, use of :00	
2. When used with o'clock	
3. Precise times	
4. Numbers of hours or minutes	
5. No commas between time and day or date	
<b>TITLES OF PERSONS</b>	21
1. General rule	
2. Courtesy titles and academic and professional degrees within text	
3. Standing alone without a name	
4. First, subsequent references	

<b>TITLES (OTHER)</b>	21
1. Books, book chapters, television shows, movies, radio programs, plays	
2. Articles in magazines, journals or newspapers	
3. Academic papers, dissertations, grant proposals, theses	
4. Musical works	
5. Lecture series, conferences, lectures, speeches	
<b>UNITED STATES</b>	22
<b>UNIVERSITY</b>	22
<b>UNIVERSITY BRAND AND VISUAL IDENTITY</b>	22
<b>UNIVERSITY PUBLICATIONS</b>	22
<b>WASHINGTON, D.C.</b>	22
<b>WAY/WAYS</b>	22
<b>WEBSITE, WORLD WIDE WEB</b>	22
<b>WHO/WHOM</b>	22
<b>YEARS</b>	22

<b>APPENDIX 1: COMMONLY MISUSED WORDS</b>	23
<b>APPENDIX 2: COMMONLY MISSPELLED WORDS</b>	25
<b>APPENDIX 3: SCHOOL, COLLEGE AND CAMPUS ABBREVIATIONS</b>	26
<b>APPENDIX 4: POSTAL INFORMATION AND STATE ABBREVIATIONS</b>	26
<b>APPENDIX 5: UPMC HOSPITALS</b>	27



# A

## ABBREVIATIONS

1. In body copy, do not abbreviate streets, avenues, boulevards or roads or directions that are part of their names unless listed as part of a numbered address.  
[The student lives on North Craig Street in Pittsburgh.](#)  
[The GPS address for the William Pitt Union is 3959 Fifth Ave.](#)  
[Oakland is divided by Fifth and Forbes avenues.](#)
2. Spell out the days of the week.
3. Spell out the months of the year when they are on their own or given with a year. When given with a specific date, abbreviate Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec. March, April, May, June and July are always spelled out.
4. Use capitalized initials without periods for acronyms and abbreviations used as words—NATO, EPA, UPMC, NAACP, USO, NOW, CDC, FBI, CIA, etc. With some exceptions (e.g., UPMC, SAT, ACT, RSVP and ID), these and other abbreviations are always written out on first reference with the acronym following in parentheses if the acronym is used again in the same document. The word the is not needed before an acronym, as it is typically understood.
5. Spell out the names of U.S. states when they stand alone in text and when they follow the name of a city. Always use the state's two-letter postal abbreviation without periods when giving a full mailing address, both within text and on mailers, including all envelopes. (See [Appendix 4](#) for proper state abbreviations and for postal information. Also see the Addresses section.)
6. Do not begin a sentence with an abbreviation.

**Right:** [Page 12 contains a mistake.](#)

**Wrong:** [P. 12 contains a mistake.](#)

## ACADEMIC CALENDAR/TERMS

Lowercase the names of terms in text.

[The fall term runs from August through December.](#)

[I believe summer session I runs in May and June.](#)

## AD/CE

Although AD is more commonly used, CE (common era) is permissible and appropriate in writing in certain contexts and is more inclusive of people of all faiths. Consider the discipline and its conventions when selecting one or the other. Also use capitalized initials without periods. (Also see the [BC/BCE](#) and [Dates, Years](#) sections.)

## ADDRESSES

1. In body copy, do not abbreviate streets, avenues, boulevards, roads, cities or states unless written as part of a numbered address. Do not abbreviate directions that are part of these names. (Also see the [Washington, D.C.](#), section.)  
[The office is on South Craig Street in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.](#)  
[Lowercase the words streets, roads, avenues, etc. when discussing more than one.](#)  
[Oakland is divided by Fifth and Forbes avenues.](#)
2. When giving a full mailing address with a zip code, abbreviate the state with the proper postal abbreviation. On business reply cards and all envelopes, postal regulations require two spaces between the state abbreviation and the zip code. (See [Appendix 4](#) for postal abbreviations.)  
[University of Pittsburgh  
Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences  
Department of Psychology  
John Smith  
3117 Sennott Square  
210 South Bouquet St.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15260](#)

3. When referencing an address within copy, separate elements with commas. University of Pittsburgh should always be the first line for all University addresses.

[Return all materials to University of Pittsburgh, Swanson School of Engineering, Department of Bioengineering, John Smith, 749 Benedum Hall, 3700 O'Hara St., Pittsburgh, PA 15261.](#)

## ADVISOR

When referring to those who provide academic and career advice at the University of Pittsburgh, the spelling advisor is preferred. Adviser is acceptable for nonacademic use.

## AFRICAN AMERICAN

This phrase is never hyphenated unless it is hyphenated as part of an official name.

Ethnicity and race should be mentioned only when they are pertinent and their pertinence is clear to the reader. (See the [Student Terminology](#) section.)

## AGE

Use a numeral when referring to age, even when it is less than 10.

[The 3-year-old child went to nursery school each morning.](#)

[Children ages 3-5 attend nursery school in the building.](#)

[The woman is in her 30s. \(Note: no apostrophe\)](#)

## ALUMNA, ALUMNUS, ALUMNAE, ALUMNI

1. In Latin, an alumna is a female (or person who identifies as female) who has attended or graduated from a particular school, college or university; the plural is alumnae. An alumnus is a male (or person who identifies as male) who has attended or graduated from a school, college or university; the plural is alumni. In instances involving more than one gender, the term alumni is used.

When referring to alumni of the University of Pittsburgh, choose the most appropriate term corresponding to the gender(s) of the person or people being discussed, if applicable. To make your reference gender neutral, make your subject plural or substitute the word graduate. In more casual writing, or in instances in which the gender identity of a graduate is unknown, the term alum may be used.

2. Identify graduates of the University of Pittsburgh with a parenthetical reference after their name that includes their school/college or degree information and their year of graduation. For those who have graduated within the last 100 years, use an apostrophe (') before the last two digits of the year. For those who graduated more than 100 years ago, list all four digits of the year.

For publications that include graduates from across the University, this reference should include the school/college abbreviation and the year. If a person received more than one degree from a Pitt school/college, separate the years of graduation with a comma. If a person received more than one degree from Pitt but from different schools/colleges, separate the school abbreviations and dates with a semicolon. A G after a year indicates a graduate degree. If a school grants only graduate degrees (e.g., School of Law, School of Medicine), the G is redundant and is not used. (See Appendix 3 for school and college abbreviations.)

Mary Stuart (SOC WK '74, '76G) attended the reunion last year.

James Harper (A&S '03, '05G; MED '09) will be speaking on the panel.

For publications that are specific to a school/college (and thus from which all alumni listed will be assumed to have graduated), give the degree(s) and year(s) of graduation.

Pam Schmidt (BS '12) is the most recent member of her family to graduate from the University of Pittsburgh Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences. The first in her family to do so was her great-great-aunt Selma Johnson (BA 1912).

Do not use parenthetical references for alumni who did not graduate with a degree or for current students. If needed, these individuals can be identified by their class year.

Tony Dorsett, a member of the Class of 1976, was Pitt's first Heisman Trophy winner and a member of the national championship-winning football team.

## AMPERSAND

An ampersand (&) may be used in graphic marks and acronyms as well as in official names of companies, organizations and publications. Never use an ampersand instead of the word and in text.

Mary Smith (A&S '05)

Mary Smith majored in psychology in the Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences.

## APOSTROPHE

1. Do not use apostrophes in the plurals of figures, years or abbreviations.  
the late 1700s, the late '60s, CDs, PCs, MBAs
2. Use apostrophes in the plurals of single letters and academic grades.  
Three r's and two s's were missing from the sign after the windstorm.  
"Getting all A's on a report card is best," she said, "but a few B's and C's aren't awful."
3. Possessives of abbreviations are formed the same way they would be if the nouns were spelled out.  
the AMA's committee  
the two RAs' decisions
4. Associate's, bachelor's and master's degrees should always be written with an 's. Never write masters' degree or masters degree.

(Also see the [Degrees](#) section.)

Mary received her master's degree from Pitt in 1967.

5. Punctuate the year of graduation with an apostrophe.

Tom McGuire (SOC WK '83)

## ART

Capitalize the titles of works of art (paintings, drawings, sculptures, etc.) and place them in quotation marks.

Vincent Van Gogh's "The Starry Night" is one of his most famous paintings.

## ARTICLES (IN NEWSPAPERS, MAGAZINES, JOURNALS, ETC.)

Articles in magazines, newspapers or academic journals are in quotation marks and principal words are capitalized; magazine, newspaper and journal titles are capitalized.

She wrote "Raising Healthy Horses," published in the latest issue of Equus.

Mary bought The New York Times at the airport.

She found his name in a New York Times article.

George Will's "The INS in Flux" in today's Pittsburgh Post-Gazette was interesting.

## AVENUE

See the [Addresses](#) section.

## AWARDS, PRIZES

Capitalize the official names of awards and prizes but not some terms used with the names.

Dickson Prize in Medicine, Dickson Medal, the medal, medal awardee

Nobel Prize in Physics, Nobel Peace Prize, Nobel Prize winner, Nobel laureate

# B

## BC/BCE

Although BC is more commonly used, BCE (before the common era) is permissible and appropriate in writing in certain contexts and is more inclusive of people of all faiths. Consider the discipline and its conventions when selecting one or the other. Also use capitalized initials without periods. (Also see the [AD/CE](#) and [Dates\\_Years](#) sections.)

## BLACK

Capitalize this term. It may sometimes be used interchangeably with African American. When practicable, ask the person(s) being described for input.

Ethnicity and race should be mentioned only when they are pertinent and their pertinence is clear to the reader. (See the [Student Terminology](#) section.)

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

On first reference, capitalize Board of Trustees when referring to Pitt's governing body; thereafter, use the board or the trustees.

Mary Ellen Callahan, vice chair of the Board of Trustees, said today that the University had a very successful year. She noted that three new trustees were appointed to the board.

## BOOKS, BOOK CHAPTERS

See the [Capitalization](#) and [Titles \(Other\)](#) sections.

## BUILDINGS

Capitalize the official names of buildings and specially designated rooms. Refer to [this list](#) for official building names and correct mailing addresses.

Wesley W. Posvar Hall (subsequent references: Posvar Hall)  
Litchfield Towers A (subsequent references: Tower A)

Thomas Detre Hall of the Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic (subsequent references: Detre Hall, or, if referring to the hospital only, WPIC, not Western Psych)

Heinz Memorial Chapel (subsequent references: Heinz Chapel or the chapel)

Cathedral of Learning (subsequent references: the Cathedral)

UPMC Presbyterian (not Presbyterian University Hospital; see [Appendix 5](#))

Hillman Cancer Center (Do not use Hillman Center or the center on subsequent references; use the entire name.)

Thomas E. Starzl Biomedical Science Tower (subsequent references: Starzl Tower)

Biomedical Science Tower 3 (subsequent references: BST3)

# C

## CAMPUSES

Do not refer to the Pittsburgh campus as the main campus or the Oakland campus. This campus may be referred to as the Pittsburgh campus or the Pittsburgh campus in Oakland.

There are also four regional campuses:

University of Pittsburgh at Bradford  
(subsequent references: Pitt-Bradford or UPB)

University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg  
(subsequent references: Pitt-Greensburg or UPG)

University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown  
(subsequent references: Pitt-Johnstown or UPJ)

University of Pittsburgh at Titusville  
(subsequent references: Pitt-Titusville or UPT)

Do not refer to these as branch campuses.

On subsequent references to the regional campuses, hyphens are used to link the city name to the name of the University.

## CANNOT

Cannot is preferred. Do not use can not.

## CAPITALIZATION

(Also see the [Departments, Offices, Programs, Schools](#) section.)

1. Capitalize the first letter of elements of hyphenated compounds only if they are proper nouns or adjectives.

Arab-Israeli negotiations

post-World War II economy

Spanish-speaking people

an A-frame house

2. Capitalize the first letter of nouns or adjectives designating parts of the world or regions of a country or those used as part of a street name.

The situation in the Middle East is always in flux.

The Western Hemisphere contains many industrialized countries.

The South seceded from the Union during the Civil War.

He lived on South Marigold Street.

Jane lived on the East Coast, Mary on the West Coast.

Coal and steel were two important industries in Western Pennsylvania.

He lived on the South Side.

Also capitalize the first letter of each word in regional terms that are considered cultural entities as much as geographic locations.

Many Pitt students come from Southwestern Pennsylvania.

3. Lowercase when a reference is to a simple direction.

She drove north for several miles.

The town was east of the Mississippi River.

4. Do not capitalize the names of the seasons within text.

Her book is due out in the spring.

Applications for the fall term are due in April.

5. Capitalize the first letter of each principal word in full names of legislative, executive and administrative bodies on first reference.

The U.S. Supreme Court debated the case yesterday.

The Federal Reserve Board helps to determine fiscal policy.

6. Capitalize corporate, professional and governmental titles when they immediately precede a person's name.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt

Queen Elizabeth II

Senator Bob Casey

Professor White

7. Lowercase nonspecific noun and adjective references.

We sat in on the congressional hearings.

The Tennessee Valley Authority is a federal agency.

He wants to be governor of Pennsylvania.

The president was elected yesterday.

8. Capitalize political organizations and their members.

The article said that Democrats were criticizing the Republican Party.

9. Lowercase nouns and adjectives designating political and economic systems and their proponents unless derived from a proper noun.

The country's ideas of democracy originated in Greece.

Some countries, however, lean toward Marxism.

10. Capitalize numerical designations of historical time periods when they are part of a proper name.

The Third Reich ruled Germany from 1933 to 1945.

**But** lowercase the following. Also, do not superscript st/rd/th in ordinal numbers.

Gutenberg invented the printing press in the 15th century.

Technology changes quickly in the 21st century.

The Venerable Bede died in the eighth century.

11. Capitalize nouns used with numbers or letters to designate major reference headings.

I believe Volume V of the magazine came out in June.

See Table 3 for more information.

See Chapter 7 for more details.

**But:** the third chapter

12. Lowercase nouns designating minor reference headings.

She turned to page 101 for more information.

The war was described in paragraph six.

13. Capitalize genus names in biological terminology, but lowercase species names.

The domestic dog is included in the genus *Canis*.

A common fruit fly is *Drosophila melanogaster*.

14. Capitalize terms that identify geological eras, periods, epochs and strata; also capitalize the word age in names such as Age of Fishes.

The class studies the Mesozoic era.

The Quaternary period will be studied in the spring.

All the students wanted to learn more about the Age of Reptiles.

15. Capitalize the titles of newspapers, magazines, journals, websites and religious texts.

The article will be published in the next issue of JAMA: The Journal of the American Medical Association.

Details of the event will be posted on Facebook.

The course on comparative religions will cover the Bible, the Torah and the Koran.

16. The titles of books, book chapters, poems, plays, short stories, essays, movies, pamphlets, CDs, long musical compositions, songs, radio and TV programs, lectures, dissertations, articles, and works of art should be capitalized and put in quotation marks.

Shakespeare's "Othello" will be presented next week.

Gainsborough's "Blue Boy" will be part of the exhibition.

Robert Frost's "Dust of Snow" is a beautiful poem.

The third chapter of "Treasure Island" is titled "The Black Spot."

17. Capitalize common titles of book sections when they refer to a section in the same book.

See the Appendix for further information.

**But:** Smith said that her husband wrote the introduction to her book.

18. Capitalize nouns and adjectives designating philosophical, literary, musical, and artistic movements, styles, and schools if they are derived from proper nouns.

Chopin was a composer of the Romantic period.

**But:** Irving Berlin was a composer of romantic songs.

19. Capitalize acronyms/initialisms and do not use periods. With the exception of UPMC, RSVP, CD, SAT, ACT and ID (as in ID badge), abbreviations are usually written out on first reference with the acronym following in parentheses. Give acronyms/initialisms only if they will be used.

Individualized Educational Program (IEP)

## CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY

On first reference, use Carnegie Mellon University. On subsequent references, use Carnegie Mellon. Do not use CMU.

## CATHEDRAL OF LEARNING

Both the C and the L in Cathedral of Learning should always be capitalized. In subsequent references, Cathedral may be used, but the C should be capitalized. The reason for this is that the building is not actually a cathedral.

The Cathedral of Learning is one of the tallest academic buildings in the world. The Cathedral houses the beautiful Nationality Rooms.

Heinz Memorial Chapel is a remarkable architectural achievement. The chapel is a favorite wedding spot for Pitt alumni.

## CD

This abbreviation for compact disc does not need to be spelled out on first reference. Titles of CDs and the songs on them are capitalized and placed in quotation marks.

"Piano Man" was her favorite song on Billy Joel's "Greatest Hits."



## CE

See the [AD/CE](#) and [Dates, Years](#) sections.

## CENTERS, INSTITUTES, LABORATORIES

(Also see the [Departments, Offices, Programs, Schools](#) section.)

Capitalize the full name on first reference.  
See examples for subsequent references.

John C. Mascaro Learning Center (subsequent references: Mascaro Learning Center or the center)

Institute for Higher Education Management  
(subsequent references: the institute)

Heinz Nutrition Laboratory (subsequent references: the laboratory)

McGowan Institute for Regenerative Medicine (subsequent references: McGowan Institute or the institute)

A [list of official names](#) at the University of Pittsburgh is available online.

## CENTS

Sums of dollars and cents are transcribed in numerical figures, whether below 10 or not.

\$5 (not \$5.00), \$35, 54 cents

## CENTURY

(Also see the [Dates](#) section.)

Do not capitalize the c in century, and do not superscript st/nd/rd/th after the number.

Gutenberg invented the printing press in the 15th century.

The professor said to read the chapter about 18th-century art.

The Venerable Bede died in the eighth century.

## CHANCELLOR

(Also see the [Referencing People](#) section)

All of the following are correct:

University of Pittsburgh Chancellor Joan Gabel

Chancellor Gabel

Joan Gabel, chancellor, University of Pittsburgh

Joan Gabel, Pitt's chancellor

When the title stands alone without the name or follows the name, use lower case, as in the University chancellor or the chancellor.

## CHAPTERS (OF BOOKS)

See the [Capitalization](#) and [Numbers](#) sections.

## CITY OF PITTSBURGH

Capitalize the c in city when it is part of an official name of a municipality, committee or event. Lowercase the word city when making general references.

The city of Pittsburgh is a great place to live.

I ran in the 2005 Richard S. Caligiuri City of Pittsburgh Great Race.

The City of Pittsburgh levies taxes on its residents.

## CLASS

For information on writing the names/titles of classes, see the [Courses, Classes, Majors](#) section. Capitalize the word class when it is used with a year. Otherwise, it is lowercased.

He graduated as a member of the Class of 1970.

He was treasurer of the class for several years.

## COLLECTIVE NOUNS

A collective noun takes a singular verb when it refers to the collection as a whole and a plural verb when it refers to the members of the collection as separate persons or things.

The faculty is deliberating its decision.

The faculty have all gone home.

## COLONS

1. The first word following a colon is usually lowercased, except when what follows is a quotation, a title or a complete sentence. Also, uppercase after a colon in a brief heading or introductory term.

He had only one pleasure: eating.

When asked, the publisher said: "This book will become a best seller."

2. Capitalize the first word following a colon in a title.

Mary Smith: An Annotated Biography

3. A colon is placed outside quotation marks and parentheses.

There were three reasons she liked the article "A New Millennium": its organization, its flow and its ending.

The following is from the World Dictionary (published in 1985): Language evolves from older forms into newer ones.

4. Use one space after a colon.

## COMMAS

1. Use a comma between the elements in a series of three or more except in the simplest of series, when the comma after the penultimate item in the series (the serial comma) can be omitted. Use the serial comma in any series if there is any possibility of confusion or misunderstanding.

The colors red, white and blue are symbolic of the United States.

To be eligible to graduate, students need to fill out and file the proper forms and applications, complete all outstanding assignments, and be sure that they are in good standing with the University.

2. Do not separate a name from a suffix (Jr., Sr., or a numeral) with a comma.

Mark L. Conley Jr. will speak to the group.

William P. Frederick III

3. Any word, phrase or clause that is not essential to the meaning of a sentence is called nonrestrictive. Set off nonrestrictive elements with commas.

George Washington, the first president of the United States, lived at Mount Vernon.

The Ohio River, which flows to the Mississippi, forms in Pittsburgh.

His wife, Vicky, is an expert at sewing.

4. Restrictive words, phrases or clauses are necessary to the meaning of a sentence and are not set off by commas.  
*Shakespeare's play "Othello" was presented at the theater. (The name of the play is essential to the meaning.)*  
*People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.*
5. Do not use a comma between two adjectives when the first modifies the combination of the second adjective plus the word or phrase it modifies.  
*a cheap fur coat*  
*a modern three-story building*

## COMMONLY MISUSED WORDS

See [Appendix 1](#).

## COMMENCEMENT

See the [Special Events](#) section.

## COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

Pennsylvania is legally a commonwealth, not a state. Lowercase commonwealth when the word stands alone or in the phrase commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

*Many students who attend Pitt are residents of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania.*

*Many students live in the commonwealth.*

## COMPANY NAMES

Use official company names, and follow the company's lead regarding punctuation and the use of the word and or an ampersand. A shortened or less formal name may be used if the company is best known by that name. Capitalize the word the before a company name if it is part of the official name.

## COMPUTER TERMINOLOGY

1. **Terms:** Use blog, CD, database, Ethernet, homepage, internet, online, offline,

username, podcast, web, website, webcast, webmaster, World Wide Web.

2. **Email:** Use email within copy; in a list, such as on a poster or brochure, use Phone, Fax, Email.
3. **Breaking website URLs on two or more lines:** Use good judgment in continuing website addresses onto another line within copy. Generally, try to break after a slash. Breaking a URL after a dot (leaving what looks like a period at the end of a line) may cause confusion for the reader. It would be better to place the dot at the beginning of the next line. Using a hyphen to break a word at the end of a line is not a good idea because some URLs contain hyphens as part of the address. Instead, put the entire word on the next line. If the URL covers two or more lines of text, consider using a URL shortener to make it both easier to fit in your text and easier for someone to type correctly into a browser.
4. **Web addresses at the end of sentences:** Use a period after a web address that ends a sentence.
5. **Web addresses in text:** When referencing complete website addresses, there is no need to underline, italicize or boldface them. Also avoid using angle brackets around URLs.
6. **Using http and www:** Http stands for Hypertext Transfer Protocol. It is no longer necessary when printing website addresses to start them with http. In addition, not all URLs start with www, and some addresses will not work if www is added. Before including a web address, verify that the URL works as written and then publish it accordingly. If necessary, consult the office, department

or unit responsible for the website and find out the appropriate address.

7. **Login/log in:** Logon and login can be nouns or adjectives, but log off, log on and log in are verbs. Use your login name to log on, but be sure to log off when you are done with the network.

## CONFERENCES

Capitalize principal words of the titles of conferences or annual meetings. Titles of individual lectures or presentations at a conference are capitalized and in quotation marks.

*Mina Smith gave the lecture "Women in the Arts" at the annual Arts and Writing Conference.*

*The School of Education will host the 2028 Principals Conference on Psychology in Education.*

## COURSES, CLASSES, MAJORS

Capitalize a subject of study when used as the name of a specific course. Otherwise, do not capitalize names of fields of study, major areas or major subjects except those words that are proper nouns (names of languages, geographic locations, etc.).

*I have to take Economics 204 to graduate, but I won't need any more economics courses after that.*

*She will take Anthropology 780: Cultural Anthropology next term.*

*All students must meet requirements in the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences.*

*Mary is studying biology now, but her first major was English literature.*

## D

## DASHES

Below is a summary of the main uses of em dashes and hyphens. There should be no space between the dash/hyphen and the text surrounding it.



1. Em dashes are used to set off parenthetical content that deserves emphasis; set off appositives that contain commas; and set off a list, a restatement, an amplification or a dramatic shift in tone or thought.

She uses all sorts of seasonings in her cooking—cumin, tarragon, ginger and coriander, for example.

The kiwi—a small, flightless bird—is the national symbol of New Zealand.

I just don't see the point of this—but I digress.

2. Hyphens are used for connecting continuing or inclusive numbers, like dates or reference numbers.

1968-72 pp. 38-45

May-June 2003 John 4:3-6:2

Hyphens also are used to separate noninclusive numbers, such as phone numbers and Social Security numbers.

+1-412-555-1212

Additionally, hyphens are used in compound words and in word divisions. (Also see the Hyphens, Compounds section.)

non-English-speaking countries

poverty-stricken individuals

much-needed vacation

## DATES, YEARS

(Also see the [Century](#) section.)

1. Use figures for the days of the month. Omit rd, th, st and nd following the numerals.  
Nov. 3
2. Commas are used to set off the year from the day of the month. When only the month and the year are given, the comma is omitted. Use a comma to set off a full date (month, day, year) from the text that follows.

On Tuesday, Dec. 3, 1991, at 10 a.m., the board met to discuss the issue.

The play was introduced to the public in July 1950.

3. Although BC and AD are more commonly used, BCE (before the common era) and CE (common era) are permissible and appropriate in writing in certain contexts and are more inclusive of people of all faiths. Consider the discipline and its conventions when selecting BC/AD or BCE/CE. Be consistent. Also use capitalized initials without periods.
4. Use a hyphen for inclusive years. For inclusive years in the same century, use only the last two digits of the year after the hyphen. For inclusive years spanning more than one century, use all four digits of the year after the hyphen.  
This fee applies to the 2019-20 academic year.  
The years she lived in Pittsburgh were 1982-2003.
5. Do not use apostrophes in the plurals of years.  
the 1800s, the '60s
6. Avoid vague references to dates. Use specific dates instead.  
In fall 2006  
**Not:** Last fall

## DAYS

Spell out the days of the week.

We usually meet on Thursdays, but this week we will be meeting on Tuesday.

## DEGREES (ACADEMIC)

(Also see the [Student Terminology](#) section.)

1. Academic degrees can be abbreviated or spelled out. If abbreviations are used, do not use periods between initials.  
Baker earned a Bachelor of Arts in journalism.  
Smith earned a BA in journalism at Pitt in 1989.  
Baker received his bachelor's degree from Pitt.

Jones earned a Master of Fine Arts at Pitt.

Jones received an MFA from the University.

Jones received a master's degree from Pitt.

2. When referring to a doctorate, use the following:

Jones earned her doctoral degree at Pitt.

Jones earned her doctorate at Pitt.

Jones received her PhD in psychology in 1970.

Jones received a Doctor of Philosophy from Pitt in June.

3. For honors references, do not capitalize or italicize cum laude, magna cum laude or summa cum laude.
4. In references to certificates, capitalize the official name of the certificate.

Amy received a Certificate in Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies from Pitt. She said that this certificate helped her to qualify for a job at a women's shelter.

This student has earned a Graduate Certificate in Gerontology.

## DEGREES (TEMPERATURE)

Spell out the word degree(s) after a number. (See the [Numbers](#) section.)

## DEPARTMENTS, OFFICES, PROGRAMS, SCHOOLS

1. Capitalize the names of academic departments, offices, programs and schools when the formal name is used. Also capitalize a short form of the name when not accompanied by the word department, office, program or school if lack of capitalization could create confusion. Use lowercase in all other instances. Refer to [this page](#) for an updated list of formal names of the University's departments, offices, programs and schools.

The University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine is among the best in the country. The medical school is located in Scaife Hall.

The School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences awards both undergraduate and graduate degrees. Many Health and Rehabilitation Sciences undergraduates go on to pursue graduate degrees.

The Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program at Pitt is very popular.

Many students apply for the program in gender, sexuality, and women's studies during their sophomore year.

The Department of Philosophy owns a large number of research books.

"Where is the philosophy department located?" asked the student.

2. There are four named schools at the University of Pittsburgh: the David C. Frederick Honors College, the Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business, the Swanson School of Engineering and the Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences. The legal contracts between the University and the donors stipulate that the full name of each school must be used in the first and most prominent references. Shortened names may be used on subsequent references as follows:

David C. Frederick Honors College: Frederick Honors College

Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business: Katz Graduate School of Business, Katz School, Katz

Swanson School of Engineering: Swanson School

Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences: Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences, Dietrich School

3. Capitalize the names of administrative departments and offices when the formal name is used. Also capitalize a short form of the name when not accompanied by the word department or office on a subsequent reference if lack of capitalization could create confusion. Refer to [this page](#) for an updated list of the formal names of the University's departments, offices, programs and schools.

Pitt Magazine is produced by the Office of University Communications and Marketing.

University Communications and Marketing produces more than 6,000 print projects each year.

4. Lowercase a general reference to the University's schools of the health sciences. Do capitalize the entity University of Pittsburgh Health Sciences.  
  
The University of Pittsburgh's schools of the health sciences have earned much praise in recent years.  
  
This program is presented by University of Pittsburgh Health Sciences and the Office of International Services.
5. University of Pittsburgh Police Department is the official name of the University's law enforcement agency. On subsequent references, use University police or Pitt Police. Do not use campus police.

## DIRECTIONS

See the [Capitalization](#) section.

## DISSERTATIONS

Capitalize the principal words and place quotation marks around the names of academic papers, dissertations, essays, lectures and theses. (See the [Capitalization](#) and [Titles \[Other\]](#) sections.)

Her dissertation was titled "Reactions in the Luteal Phase."

## DOLLARS

Sums of dollars and cents are transcribed in numerical figures whether below 10 or not. (See the [Numbers](#) section.)

\$5 (not \$5.00), \$35, 54 cents

When describing numerical amounts equal to or greater than a million, use a numeral and the word million, billion, etc.

There is a \$5 million endowment.

**Not:** There is a five-million-dollar endowment.

There is a \$5,000,000 endowment.

# E

## ELLIPSES

1. Use three ellipsis points to indicate the omission of one or more words within quoted materials. Use a space before and after, but not between, ellipses.  
  
"Ellipsis points are used ... to indicate the omission of one or more words."
2. Use four ellipsis points to indicate the omission of the last words of a quoted sentence. If the portion of the sentence that is being quoted reads like a complete sentence, use one period, a space, and three ellipsis points. If the sentence is incomplete, use a space and four ellipsis points.  
  
"Ellipsis points are used by editors to indicate omissions. ..."  
  
"Ellipsis points are used by editors to indicate ...."
3. Do not use ellipsis points at the beginning of a sentence when part of a quote is omitted.  
  
"And Jill came tumbling after" is the part of the nursery rhyme that most people forget.

## EMAIL

See the [Computer Terminology](#) section.

## ENDOWED CHAIRS, PROFESSORSHIPS

When a faculty member holds an endowed chair or distinguished professorship, the first letter of each principal word is capitalized. When the chair itself is part of a formal name, it also should be capitalized.

William P. Thomas, who is the R.K. Mellon Professor of Physics and Distinguished Service, will be the guest speaker.

The company's gift helped to establish the J.W. Smith Chair in Psychology.

Robert Brandom, Distinguished Service Professor of Philosophy, will present some of his research findings at the conference.

## ETHNICITY AND RACE

Ethnicity and race should be mentioned only when they are pertinent and their pertinence is clear to the reader.

In light of the 2003 U.S. Supreme Court ruling (Grutter v. Bollinger et al.) related to the University of Michigan Law School's admissions policy, language concerning affirmative action and the recruitment of traditionally underrepresented populations must be carefully chosen and consistent with the law. The specific language that should be used is the province of legal counsel and should be decided on a case-by-case basis. When working on copy/text related to the recruitment of traditionally underrepresented populations, contact University Communications and Marketing for assistance.

## F

### FELLOWSHIPS, SCHOLARSHIPS

Capitalize the official names of fellowships and scholarships. On subsequent references, the terms fellow and school should be lowercased unless they come directly before a name.

Helen Faison Scholarship; Faison scholar or Faison scholarship

Fulbright scholar; Fulbright Scholar Jane Doe

National Merit scholarships

Andrew Mellon Fellowship; Mellon fellow

## FORMS

For the sake of clarity, capitalize the names of forms in copy-dense material, such as school bulletins and admissions, scholarship and financial aid materials. (Note: Do not capitalize the word form.)

Students must fill out the Grade Option form and the Request for Education Benefits form.

## FUNDRAISER/FUNDRAISING

Use as one word, without a hyphen, in all instances, unless it is set for differently as part of a proper name.

## G

### GENDER SENSITIVITIES

1. Avoid using gender-specific terms and titles. For example:

**Instead of:**  
chairman  
waiter/waitress  
steward/stewardess  
fireman  
mailman  
mankind  
congressman  
policeman  
freshman

**Use:**  
chairperson or chair  
server  
flight attendant  
firefighter  
mail carrier  
humankind  
representative  
police officer  
first-year student

2. When writing about a specific person, use that person's preferred personal pronouns. They, them and their are acceptable singular personal pronouns for those who identify as gender nonbinary or who prefer a gender-neutral pronoun. Provide context that suggests that they, them and their refer to a specific person.

Catherine has just finished their third year at Pitt. They hope to go to medical school after graduation.

3. When writing about an unknown person or people, avoid using awkward constructions like he/she/they or his/her/their (as well as unintentionally mis-gendering someone) by rewriting to make the subject of any given sentence plural.

**Instead of:** Each child brought his/her/their snack from home.

**Do this:** The children brought their snacks from home.

4. Generally make sure that any language you

use is gender inclusive. This includes avoiding words and phrases that imply a gender binary, such as the phrase "ladies and gentlemen."

For additional guidelines on gender-inclusive language, see the Resources page on the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program website at [gsws.pitt.edu/resources](https://gsws.pitt.edu/resources).

## GENUS NAMES

See the [Capitalization](#) section.

## GRADES

Capitalize letter grades, and use an apostrophe before the s to make them plural.

"Getting all A's on a report card is best," she said, "but a few B's and C's aren't awful."

## GRANTS, GRANT PROPOSALS

Capitalize the principal words of and put in quotation marks the titles of grant proposals.

Nicole Ansani earned one of four research grants from the Drug Information Association for her proposal, titled "Provision of Drug Information to Patients with Diabetes Using an Interactive Forum."

The principal words of funded grants should be capitalized.

## H

### HEALTH CARE

Use as two words without a hyphen in all cases unless the term is treated differently as part of a proper name.

The program provided young children with access to quality health care.

Health care benefits are part of the company's compensation package.

The VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System benefits many veterans.

## HEALTH SCIENCES

See the [Departments, Offices, Programs, Schools](#) section.

## HOMECOMING

See the [Special Events](#) section.

## HOSPITALS

UPMC is the umbrella organization for most of the hospitals and clinical activities associated with the University. See [Appendix 5](#) for the names of UPMC hospitals.

## HYPHENS, COMPOUNDS

(Also see the [Dashes](#) section.)

1. Most two-word compound adjectives are hyphenated when placed before the noun they modify.

*Aspirin is usually a fast-acting medication.*

*The artist uses high-quality metals in his jewelry.*

*The committee followed the established decision-making process.*

*Many art galleries feature 17th- and 18th-century art.*

*She is a full-time student.*

*He lives in on-campus housing.*

2. Compound adjectives of three or more words are generally hyphenated when placed before the noun they modify.

*It was strictly a spur-of-the-moment decision.*

3. When the words that make up a compound adjective follow the noun they modify, they are generally not hyphenated. A hyphen can be used if confusion would occur without it.

*Decisions made on the spur of the moment generally are not good ones.*

*The main streets in the town were tree lined.*

*He attends college part time.*

*She lives on campus.*

4. Do not put a hyphen between an adverb ending in -ly and an adjective.

*He is a highly skilled craftsman.*

5. Do hyphenate all compound adjectives when the second adjective ends in -ed.

*He is a high-spirited youngster.*

6. Use hyphens with nouns that represent different and equally important functions when they form a single expression.

*Sparta was an important city-state in ancient Greece.*

*This award recognizes exceptional student-athletes.*

*The schools of the health sciences are home to many notable physician-scientists.*

7. The following prefixes are generally not hyphenated. They are hyphenated when the second element is capitalized or is a figure (e.g., post-Victorian, pro-Soviet, pre-1960s), there is a homonym (e.g., to recover a lost object and to re-cover a couch), or the use of a hyphen avoids a strange vowel connection that might cause confusion or be misleading (e.g., anti-inflation, co-owner, etc.).

ante	inter	non	sub
anti	intra	over	super
bi	macro	post	supra
bio	meta	pre	trans
co	micro	pro	ultra
counter	mid	pseudo	un
extra	mini	re	under
infra	multi	semi	

*Postmaster Ken Smith is a post-master's degree student.*

**But:** *Ken Jones is a postdoctoral student.*

8. Almost all self- and ex- compounds are hyphenated except selfless, selfish and selfsame.  
*I will not indulge in self-pity.*  
*His ex-wife is coming to the wedding.*
9. Suffixes are rarely hyphenated. Exceptions include some forms of -wide and -like. A hyphen can be used to aid in comprehension.

*The statewide initiative was successful.*

*The policy on nondiscrimination is University-wide at Pitt.*

*The internet outage is occurring campuswide.*

*The instrument had a bell-like sound.*

## INSTITUTES

See the [Centers, Institutes, Laboratories](#) section.

## JR., SR., NUMERALS IN A NAME

Do not separate a name from a suffix (Jr., Sr. or a numeral) with a comma.

*Mark L. Conley Jr. will speak to the group.*

*William P. Frederick III will attend.*

## LABORATORIES

See the [Centers, Institutes, Laboratories](#) section.

## LATIN TERMS

(Also see the [Alumna, Alumni, Alumnae, Alumni](#) section.)

1. Do not italicize Latin terms such as emeritus, alumnus, curriculum vitae (CV), pro bono or ad hoc when they appear in text.
2. Emeritus is a term used for a person who has retired from an office or position or who has completed a term of service and has retained the last title held; emerita is the feminine form. The plurals of these terms are emeriti and emeritae, respectively.

*Louise Smith, professor emerita of archaeology, gave a guest lecture last week.*

*Professors Emeriti Thomas Brown, Michael Gray and Hugh McFadden attended the anniversary gala.*



3. The terms *resume*, *curriculum vitae*, *vita* and *CV* may be used interchangeably.
4. Be aware of the plural forms of some terms adopted from other languages. The word *data* is plural (the singular is *datum*), as are *media* (the singular is *medium*) and the Greek term *criteria* (the singular is *criterion*). The plurals of *curriculum* and *symposium* are *curricula* and *symposia*, but *stadiums* and *gymnasiums* are commonly accepted plural spellings of *stadium* and *gymnasium*. Refer to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary for the preferred spellings of plural Latin and Greek terms.

## LECTURES, LECTURE TITLES

Capitalize the principal words of the titles of lecture series or conferences. Titles of speeches or lectures should be capitalized and placed within quotation marks. (See the [Capitalization](#) and [Titles \[Other\]](#) sections.)

Mina Smith gave the lecture “Women in the Arts” at the annual Arts and Writing Lecture Series.

## LISTS

1. Aim for simplicity and concision in any list. Most lists can be written as running lines of text, without the need for bullet points, numerals or any other way of indicating each item in the list.
2. If the items in a list read as a complete sentence, punctuate the entire list as such, using commas or semicolons at the end of each item, a conjunction at the end of the penultimate item, and a period at the end.

The charges brought against the driver included

- leaving the scene of an accident involving injury,
- driving with a suspended license, and
- driving while intoxicated.

After careful investigation, the committee was convinced that

1. the organization’s lawyer, Watson, had consulted no one before making the decision;

2. neither the chair, the president, nor the secretary of the organization had contacted Watson; and
3. the president was as surprised as anyone by what had happened.

3. Strive for consistency within the list. If one of the items in the list starts with a capital letter, capitalize the first letter of all items. If one or more items is a complete sentence, ending with a period, punctuate all items as such.

## M

### MAGAZINES

Capitalize titles of magazines. Capitalize an initial the in the title of a magazine if it is part of the official name of the publication.

(See the [Capitalization](#) and [Titles \[Other\]](#) sections.)

### MAJORS

See the [Courses, Classes, Majors](#) section.

### MONEY

See the [Numbers](#) section.

### MONTHS

Spell out March, April, May, June and July. Abbreviate the remaining months of the year as follows: Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.

### MUSICAL COMPOSITIONS AND TERMS

Titles of operas, long works and CDs are capitalized and placed in quotation marks, as are titles of songs and short musical compositions.

(Also see the [Capitalization](#), [Titles \[Other\]](#), [CD](#) and [Songs](#) sections.)

We saw an amazing performance of “Don Giovanni” in Italy last year.

“Piano Man” was her favorite song on Billy Joel’s CD “Greatest Hits.”

## N

### NEWSPAPERS

Capitalize titles of newspapers. If the word *the* precedes the name, capitalize it if it is part of the official name of the newspaper.

“Some people miss *The Pittsburgh Press*,” she said, “but most are happy with the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*.”

### NON-ENGLISH WORDS AND PHRASES

Many non-English words and phrases have been so frequently used in English-speaking countries that they have been incorporated into the dictionary. If a word or phrase from another language appears in the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, it can appear in text in roman. If it does not appear in the dictionary, put the word or phrase in quotation marks and give a definition in parentheses if necessary.

### NUMBERS

1. Spell out the first nine cardinal numbers (one to nine), zero, and the first nine ordinal numbers (first to ninth). Use figures for numbers above nine.  
Jane had four kittens in the basket.  
Peter put 14 gerbils in the cage.  
Read the ninth chapter but not the 10th chapter by tomorrow.  
She teaches grades two and three.  
His daughter is in the 11th grade.
2. Spell out any number that begins a sentence.  
Fifty-four students attended the event.

#### Exceptions:

3. Use a numeral when referring to age, even when it is less than 10.  
The 3-year-old child went to nursery school each morning.

Children ages 3-5 attend nursery school in the building.

The woman is in her 30s. (Note: no apostrophe)

4. When using percentages within body copy, the number is expressed in figures, even when it is less than 10, with the percent symbol (%). The word percent may be used in casual language. (Note: Percent is one word and is singular.)

Sam Rich said that 8% of the population is eligible for the program.

He has a zero percent chance of winning.

5. Sums of dollars and cents are written in numerical figures whether below 10 or not.  
\$5 (not \$5.00), \$35, 54 cents

6. When describing numerical amounts equal to or greater than a million, use a numeral and the word million, billion, etc.

The government spent \$3.5 billion on the project.

There are 100 million people in that country.

There is a \$5 million endowment.

**Not:** five million dollar endowment

7. Use numerals for temperature.  
Write out the word degree(s).

It was 80 degrees in Florida that day.

8. Always use numerals when referring to measurements, times, page numbers, volumes, tables and chapters.

9. All numbers, even those less than 10, may be written as numerals for the sake of consistency.

The University offers 4-, 6- and 12-week sessions during the summer.

The school has been ranked 9th, 11th and 14th in the last three years by U.S. News & World Report.

## O

### OFFICES

See the [Departments, Offices, Programs, Schools](#) section.

Although the official title of an office is usually "Office of ...," exceptions do exist. One exception is the University of Pittsburgh Parking Services Office.

### ORGANIZATIONS

Capitalize formal names of University organizations.

The University Senate has two subgroups: the Faculty Assembly and the Senate Council.

The Staff Council will meet next Friday afternoon.

In running text, an initial the in front of an organization name should be capped if part of the formal name.

The department has received a number of grants from The Pittsburgh Foundation.

### ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY, DEPARTMENT OF; ORTHOPAEDIC

The Department of Orthopaedic Surgery in the School of Medicine spells orthopaedic with an a. To be consistent, do the same.

## P

### PERCENT

When using percentages within body copy, the number is expressed in figures, even when it is less than 10, with the percent symbol (%). The word percent may be used in casual language. (Note: Percent is one word and is singular.)

Sam Rich said that 8% of the population is eligible for the program.

He has a zero percent chance of winning.

## PHONE NUMBERS

As area codes are now required when dialing, omit parentheses and use hyphens when listing phone or fax numbers. Additionally, because Pitt is an institution with global reach, include the +1 country code with all phone numbers.

+1-412-624-4141

**Not:** (412) 624-4141 or 412.624.4141

## PITTSBURGHESE

Avoid the use of Pittsburghese, as in the following:

The clothes need washed.

The dog needs out.

Say/write instead:

The clothes need to be washed.

The dog needs to go out.

## PLURALS, POSSESSIVES

1. An apostrophe should be used to form a plural only in the case of single letters. Never use an 's to form a plural of a word.

p's and q's

Make sure to cross your t's and dot your i's.

He received two A's and three B's on his report card.

2. To form a possessive of a singular word, add 's, including to words that end in s, with the exception of proper nouns ending in s and those words used primarily in a descriptive sense.

the hostess's invitation

the witness's answer

Dickens' novels

Texas' population

teachers college

## POEMS

See the [Capitalization](#) section.



## POLICE

See the [Departments, Offices, Programs, Schools](#) section.

## PREFIXES

See the [Hyphens, Compounds](#) section, item 7.

## PROFESSORSHIPS

See the [Endowed Chairs, Professorships](#) section.

## PROVED/PROVEN

The word proved is always either a verb or part of a verb phrase.

*Joe proved that the problem existed.*

*Joe has proved that the problem existed.*

Use the word proven only as an adjective.

*The medicine was a proven remedy.*

## Q

## QUOTATION MARKS

1. The comma and period go inside quotation marks.

*"I'm going home now," said Mary.*

*She said that the condition was "only temporary."*

2. The semicolon and colon almost always go outside quotation marks.

*She read "Dust of Snow"; it was her favorite poem.*

*Find the following in the article "The Guide to Writing": rules for capitalization, hyphens and commas.*

3. A question mark, exclamation point or dash goes outside quotation marks unless it is part of the quotation. A single question mark goes inside quotation marks when both the nonquoted and quoted elements are questions.

*Did he say, "Where are my books?"*

*"When did Fred go to Pitt?" asked Jean.*

*What is meant by "dog eat dog"?*

4. Use single quotation marks for quotations printed within other quotations.

*The witness said: "I heard him clearly state, 'I will be back,' before he left."*

5. If several paragraphs are to be quoted, use quotation marks at the beginning of each paragraph but only at the end of the last paragraph.

*"We are very excited about the opening of the 13th annual art show. As in years past, the artwork will be exhibited outdoors, weather permitting.*

*"While many local artists will still be featured, new to the roster are artists from Ohio, West Virginia and New York."*

6. Do not use quotation marks for topics of talks, papers or presentations. Quotation marks should be used only for the titles of talks, papers or presentations.

*The guest lecturer gave a talk on democracy in ancient Greece.*

*The guest speaker presented "Athens and Sparta: Views of Democracy in Ancient Greece" at the symposium.*

## R

## RACE

See the [Ethnicity and Race](#) and [Student Terminology](#) sections.

## RADIO PROGRAMS

See the [Titles \(Other\)](#) section.

## REFERENCING PEOPLE

Include the first name and/or initials of persons the first time they appear in an article or story. Subsequent references are to last name only.

*Patrick Gallagher spoke before the group. Gallagher stressed the importance of education in today's society.*

*Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor Ann E. Cudd was asked to comment on the award. Cudd praised the departments' efforts in securing this source of funding.*

## REGIONAL CAMPUSES

See the [Campuses](#) section.

## ROAD

See the [Addresses](#) section.

## S

## SCHOLARSHIPS

See the [Fellowships, Scholarships](#) section.

## SCHOOLS

See the [Departments, Offices, Programs, Schools](#) section.

See [Appendix 3](#) for official school names.

## SEASONS

Do not capitalize fall, winter, spring or summer. (See the [Capitalization](#) section.)

## SEMICOLONS

1. Use a semicolon to separate independent clauses not joined by a coordinating conjunction (and, but, or, nor, for).

*I know how to bake a cake; my mother would never attempt it.*

2. Semicolons are used in place of commas to separate phrases in a series when the phrases themselves contain commas.

*He went to several factories, buildings and institutions; walked several miles, visiting friends; and then returned home to eat, rest and relax.*

3. A semicolon is placed outside quotation marks and parentheses.

*I read the article "Children Today"; John Smith wrote it.*

*There were three dogs in the park (two golden retrievers and one collie); all of them were on leashes.*

## SERIES

Capitalize the principal words of (and do not put in quotation marks) the titles of lecture/speaker series and conferences. Titles of individual speeches or lectures in a series should be capitalized and placed in quotation marks.

Mina Smith gave the lecture “Women in the Arts” at the annual Arts and Writing Lecture Series.

The School of Education will host the 2020 Principals Conference on Psychology in Education.

## SOCIAL SECURITY

Within text, capitalize all references to the U.S. Social Security system.

Be sure to include the student’s Social Security number.

Contact the Social Security Administration for more information.

## SONGS

See the [Titles \(Other\)](#) section.

## SPACING

Double spacing after a period dates back to the days of typewriters. Today, computers adjust for proper spacing.

1. Therefore, in copy, use a single space after the period at the end of a sentence as well as a single space after colons and semicolons.
2. For abbreviations in names, use periods with no spaces between initials.

R.K. Mellon

W.E.B. DuBois

## SPECIAL EVENTS

Generally, use lowercase letters for orientation, commencement, homecoming and the like. Capitalize the names of those events when they immediately follow the words University of Pittsburgh or when they follow or precede a year. Engineers Week, Greek Week and the like

are capitalized. Always use lowercase letters when making a general reference.

Students should arrive at commencement an hour before the start of the program.

The University of Pittsburgh Commencement Convocation was enjoyable.

Many student organizations have committed to planning special events for homecoming.

She outlined the school’s activities for Homecoming 2019.

Many universities plan to hold honors convocations.

## STREET

See the [Addresses](#) section.

## STUDENT TERMINOLOGY

1. Lowercase the terms designating academic years.

first-year student, sophomore, junior, senior, graduate student

2. Do not use the terms upperclassman and upperclassmen. In addition to being gender specific, these terms have a socioeconomic connotation. Use upper-division student(s) instead to indicate those students who are not first-year students.

3. Use the names of racial, linguistic, religious and other groups. Ethnicity and race should be mentioned only when they are pertinent and their pertinence is clear to the reader.

Caucasian, French, Hispanic, Catholic, African American, Black, white (Note: African American is not hyphenated. The terms Black and African American can sometimes be used interchangeably. If practicable, ask the person being described for input.)

The group was composed of both Black and white students.

4. Capitalize the word class when it is used with a year. Otherwise, it is lowercased.

He graduated as a member of the Class of 1970.

He was treasurer of the class for several years.

5. Lowercase designations of officers of a class, social organization, etc., except in front of a person’s name.

She was treasurer of the Student Alumni Council.

He was elected junior class president.

Student Alumni Council Vice President Ann Jones also was present.

## T

## TELEVISION PROGRAMS

See the [Titles \(Other\)](#) section.

## TEMPERATURE

Spell out the word degree(s) after a number. (See the [Numbers](#) section.)

## TERMS

See the [Academic Calendar/Terms](#) section.

## TESTS

For widely known standardized tests that would be familiar to a general audience, it is acceptable to use an acronym on the first reference. If the name of the test would be unfamiliar to a general audience, however, spell out and capitalize the full name of the test on first reference and give the acronym in parentheses. Lowercase the names of general tests.

**Note:** Some standardized test names that appear to be acronyms, such as SAT and ACT, are now trademarked terms and do not need to be spelled out in any instance.

Graduating nursing students often take the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) following the completion of their studies.

Joan has just finished her algebra and biology tests.

## THAT/WHICH

If the clause can be omitted without leaving the noun it modifies incomplete or without

materially altering the sense of what is being said—or if it could be enclosed in parentheses—use which; otherwise, use that.

In other words, that is better used to introduce a limiting or defining clause, which to introduce a nondefining or parenthetical clause. The word which should be preceded by a comma and refers to the word directly before it.

The Ohio River, which flows to the Mississippi, forms in Pittsburgh.

The river that forms in Pittsburgh is the Ohio.

Generally speaking, which refers to things, who to persons, and that to either persons or things.

The man who answered the phone was my uncle.

My old car, which I dearly loved, was relegated to the junk heap.

The book that you sent arrived yesterday.

The crew that worked here left last week.

## THESES

Capitalize the principal words of and place quotation marks around the names of academic papers, dissertations, essays, lectures and theses.

Her dissertation was titled “Reactions in the Luteal Phase.”

See the [Capitalization](#) and [Titles \(Other\)](#) sections.

## TIMES

1. Use numerals for the hours of the day. Use lowercase letters for and periods between a.m. and p.m. Also use noon and midnight, not 12 p.m. or 12 a.m. Do not use :00 for time that falls on the hour (except to accommodate specific design considerations on invitations, posters, catalogs or similar materials).  
4 p.m. (not 4 PM, 4 P.M., 4:00 p.m. or 4 pm)  
11 in the evening (not 11:00 in the evening or 11 p.m. in the evening)  
from 10:30 a.m. to noon (not from 10:30 a.m. to 12 noon)
2. Use numerals for the time of day when it is followed by the contraction o'clock:  
My appointment is at 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

3. Use numerals for precise times.  
Her plane is due in at 1:07 this afternoon.  
I'll be there at 9:15 in the morning.
4. When writing about a quantity of hours, minutes or seconds, spell out the first nine numbers (one through nine) as well as zero. Use figures for numbers greater than nine.  
We drove for four hours and 20 minutes before we reached Washington, D.C.
5. No comma is necessary between a time and a day or date.  
Her final paper is due by 5 p.m. Dec. 12.

## TITLES OF PERSONS

1. Lowercase titles of persons except when used in front of the name or when a title is one of a kind.  
Michele Manuel, U.S. Steel Dean of Engineering, attended the center's grand opening.  
Elizabeth Farmer, dean of the School of Social Work, also attended the meeting.  
David Blair, assistant professor, and Mary March, A.W. Mellon Professor, presented papers at the conference.  
Virginia Lesner, assistant professor of engineering, teaches at Pitt. The professor says that the study of engineering is her passion.
2. Within text, do not use courtesy titles such as Dr., Mr., Ms., Mrs., Miss or Esq. In addition, it is preferred that reference to degrees be omitted. In an academic environment, a person's academic title is more descriptive than a degree abbreviation. If individuals' degrees are listed, they must be used consistently for everyone throughout. Exceptions include direct quotes or usage in certain lists, as they might appear in programs, brochures or posters—e.g., in donor lists, credentials on a poster or invitation, or addresses.
3. When a title stands alone without a name, use lowercase letters.  
He wanted to be governor of the state.

The chief executive officer of the bank was not available for comment.

The chancellor was in attendance.

4. Always include the first name and/or initials of persons the first time they appear in text. Subsequent references are to last name only.  
Joseph J. McCarthy spoke before the group. McCarthy stressed the importance of education in today's society.

## TITLES (OTHER)

(Also see the [Capitalization](#) section.)

1. Book, book chapter, television show, movie, radio program and play titles are placed in quotation marks, and principal words are capitalized.  
I read “Of Mice and Men” for my assignment.  
Who wrote “The Color Purple”?  
He watched “Wheel of Fortune” every evening.  
“Raiders of the Lost Ark” made millions of dollars at the box office.  
Shakespeare’s “Romeo and Juliet” was the reading assignment.
2. Article titles in magazines, journals and newspapers are placed in quotation marks, and principal words are capitalized; magazine, journal and newspaper names (including the word the, if part of the official name of the publication) are capitalized. Also see the Magazines and Newspapers sections for proper handling of publication names.  
She wrote “Raising Health Horses” in the latest issue of Equus.  
Mary bought The New York Times at the airport.  
George Will’s “The INS in Flux” in today’s Pittsburgh Post-Gazette was interesting.
3. Place quotation marks around the names of academic papers, dissertations, grant proposals and theses, and capitalize principal words.  
Her dissertation was titled “The Impact of Foreign Films on American Audiences.”

4. The principal words of the titles of musical works—operas, symphonies, CDs/albums, songs, etc.—are capitalized, and the titles are placed in quotation marks.

Verdi's "Aida" is a famous opera.

Some people say that "America the Beautiful" should be our national anthem.

5. Capitalize the principal words of (and do not put in quotation marks) the titles of lecture/speaker series and conferences. Titles of lectures and speeches should be capitalized and in quotation marks.

Mina Smith gave the lecture "Women in the Arts" at the annual Arts and Writing Lecture Series.

The School of Education will host the 2028 Principals Conference on Psychology in Education.

## U

### UNITED STATES

Spell out United States when used as a noun; use U.S. (with periods) when used as an adjective or in tables and graphs.

People of many different ethnic origins live in the United States.

The U.S. Congress is in session now.

### UNIVERSITY

The proper name of the institution is the University of Pittsburgh, and this should be used on first reference. Pitt or the University may be used on subsequent references. Never refer to the University as the U of Pitt, U of Pittsburgh, or Pitt U. (Note: On subsequent references, the U in University is capitalized when referring specifically to the University of Pittsburgh. Lowercase university when referring to any other institution or using the generic term.)

There are many fine programs at the University of Pittsburgh, and Pitt's dental school is one of the best in the country.

The University faculty held its meeting in the Cathedral of Learning.

Pitt is an exceptional university.

### UNIVERSITY BRAND AND VISUAL IDENTITY

A brand is an enduring platform that articulates an organization's unique identity and point of view. It helps an organization to connect with many broad, diverse communities through informed and relevant interactions. The University has a master brand that is rooted in research and truth. Visit the University's [brand website](#) for more details and for [tips on crafting content](#).

The [primary logo](#) of the University is the shield and signature. The [primary colors](#) are Pitt Blue and Pitt Gold. Visit the University brand website for more details and for approved logos and color palettes.

### UNIVERSITY PUBLICATIONS

Use these official names to refer to the following University publications:

Pittwire

Pitt Magazine

Pitt Med

University Times

## W

### WASHINGTON, D.C.

Use Washington, D.C., in text. Do not spell out District of Columbia. In an address, use Washington, DC (no periods).

### WAY/WAYS

The word way is singular; the word ways is plural.

Pittsburgh is a long way from Los Angeles.

There are several ways to travel from Pittsburgh to Los Angeles.

### WEBSITE, WORLD WIDE WEB

See the [Computer Terminology](#) section.

### WHO/WHOM

Who and whoever are used as subjects of verbs or as predicate pronouns. Whom and whomever are used as objects of verbs and prepositions.

Jane was the woman who told the story.

Whoever comes to the shelter will get help.

Whom were they talking about?

Bring whomever you like to the party.

## Y

### YEARS

See the [Dates, Years](#) section.

## APPENDIX 1: COMMONLY MISUSED WORDS

Our thanks to the Carnegie Mellon University Writer's Style Guide, the primary source for the following, which is used with permission.

### **adverse/averse**

Adverse means unfavorable. Averse means reluctant.

### **affect/effect**

To affect means (1) to influence, change or produce an effect; (2) to like to do, wear or use; or (3) to pretend. As a noun, affect is best avoided. (It is occasionally used in psychology to describe an emotion.) Effect is most commonly used as a noun, and it means result. Used as a verb, to effect means to accomplish, complete, cause, make possible or carry out.

As a general rule, if you're looking for a noun, you're probably looking for effect. If you're using a verb, you're safest with affect. (A correct use of effect as a verb is: The committee hopes to effect a change in the current policy.)

### **afterward**

not afterwards

### **all right**

not alright

### **allude/refer**

To allude to means to speak of indirectly, without mentioning specifically. To refer to means to speak of directly.

### **allusion/illusion**

An allusion is an indirect reference. An illusion is a false impression or image.

### **around/about**

Around should refer to a physical proximity or surrounding: I'll look for you around the front of the building. About indicates an approximation: Let's have lunch about 11:30 a.m.

### **author**

best as a noun, not a verb

### **beside/besides**

Use beside to mean (1) at the side of (sit beside me); (2) to compare with (beside other studies); or (3) apart from (that's beside the point).

Use besides to mean (1) furthermore (Besides, I said so.); (2) in addition to (and elm and maple trees besides); or (3) otherwise (There's no one here besides Bill and me.).

### **between**

Between takes an objective pronoun—me, her, him. "Between you and me" is correct; "Between you and I" is not.

### **biannual/biennial**

Biannual means twice a year. Biennial means every two years.

### **complement/compliment**

A complement is something that supplements. A compliment is praise or the expression of courtesy.

### **compose/comprise/constitute**

Compose is to create or put together. Comprise is to contain, to include all, or to embrace. Constitute is to make up, to be the elements of. Never write "is comprised of."

*The whole comprises the parts.*

*The parts constitute the whole.*

*The whole is composed of parts.*

*The department comprises 12 people.*

*Twelve people constitute the department.*

*The department is composed of 12 people.*

### **continual/continuous**

Continual refers to a steady repetition. Continuous means uninterrupted.

### **criteria**

plural (more than one criterion, which is a quality, a value, or a standard of judgment)

### **curricula**

plural (more than one curriculum, which is a program of academic courses or learning activities)

### **data**

The plural noun usually takes a plural verb.

If used as a collective noun, when the group or quantity is regarded as a singular noun, it takes a singular verb. (The data is sound.)

### **daylight saving time**

not daylight-savings time or daylight-saving time

### **different from**

not different than

### **disinterested/uninterested**

Disinterested means impartial. Uninterested means lacking interest.

### **Eastern Standard Time**

not Eastern standard time or eastern standard time

### **entitled/titled**

Entitled means having the right to something. Use titled to introduce the name of a work.

*She is entitled to the inheritance.*

*The article is titled "Love and Illusion."*

### **farther/further**

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

### **fewer/less**

In general, use fewer for individual items, less for bulk or quantity.

### **hang/hung/hanged**

Hang means to fasten or suspend, usually from above, with no support from below. Hung is the past tense of this verb and is used to refer to objects. Hanged refers to people and means to kill or commit suicide by suspending from the neck.

*She hangs artwork for the gallery. Last week she hung 48 pieces.*

*Police found the prisoner had hanged himself before the trial.*

### **health care**

Use as two words without a hyphen in all cases, unless it is treated differently as part of a proper name.



### **historic/historical**

Historic means important in history.  
Historical refers to any event in the past.

### **hopefully**

Unless you're describing the way in which someone spoke, appeared or acted, do not use this word.

**Right:** I hope we can go.

**Wrong:** Hopefully, we can go.

**Right:** It is hoped the report will address that issue.

**Wrong:** Hopefully, the report will address that issue.

**Right:** She eyed the interview list hopefully.

### **imply/infer**

Imply means to suggest or indicate indirectly.  
To infer is to conclude or decide from something known or assumed.

In general, if you imply something, you're sending out a message. If you infer something, you're interpreting a message.

### **in regard to**

not in regards to

As regards or regarding may also be used.

### **insure/ensure**

Insure means to establish a contract for insurance of some type. Ensure means to guarantee.

### **irregardless**

Use regardless instead.

### **-ize**

Do not coin verbs with this suffix, and do not use already coined words such as finalize (use end or conclude) or utilize (use the word use).

### **lay/lie**

Lay means to place something or someone down. It must be followed by a direct object.  
Lie means to rest or recline. Lie is not followed by a direct object. The tenses of these two verbs can be confusing, especially because the simple past form of the verb lie (which is lay) is the same word as the simple present lay. The

tenses are as follows: Lay (simple present), laid (simple past), laid (past participle), and laying (present participle). Lie (simple present), lay (simple past), lain (past participle), lying (present participle).

*She usually lays the book on the table, but I don't know where she laid it this morning.*

*When he is sick he likes to lie on the sofa.*

*When he had the flu last week, he lay there for three days straight.*

### **lectern/podium**

A speaker stands on a podium and behind a lectern.

### **let/leave**

To let alone means to allow something to remain undisturbed. To leave alone means to depart from or cause to be in solitude.

### **like/as**

Use like to compare nouns and pronouns. Use as to introduce clauses and phrases. Like is the preferred expression (rather than such as) in this kind of phrase: painters like Rubens.

### **literally/figuratively**

Literally means in an exact sense. Figuratively means metaphorically or in a manner of speaking.

**Right:** The furnace literally exploded.

**Right:** He was so furious he figuratively blew his stack.

**Wrong:** He was so furious he literally exploded.

### **me/myself**

Me is the objective case of I. Myself is used reflexively, for emphasis, or in absolute construction.

**Right:** It's between you and me.

**Wrong:** You can tell your supervisor or myself.

**Right:** I, myself, believe otherwise.

### **more than/over**

Use more than to mean in excess of. Use over when referring to physical placement of an object, an ending, or extent of authority.

**Right:** More than 25 professors participated.

**Wrong:** The campus has over 50 buildings.

### **nor**

Use this word any time you use neither.

### **past experience**

This is redundant. Use experience alone.

### **presently/currently**

Many writers use these terms as if they were synonymous. The preferred meaning of presently is soon. Presently can also be used to mean for the time being or temporarily. Currently means now. In most cases you can do without using currently. For example, "We are currently revising the plan" works better when simply stated, "We are revising the plan."

### **pretense/pretext**

Pretense is a false show or unsupported claim to some distinction or accomplishment. Pretext is a false reason or motive put forth to hide the real one—an excuse or a cover-up.

### **principal/principle**

Principal as a noun is a chief person or thing; as an adjective, it means first in importance. Principle is a noun meaning a fundamental truth, doctrine, or law; a guiding rule or code of conduct; or a method of operation.

*John is a principal in the law firm.*

*The principal rule in medicine is to do no harm.*

*I had difficulty understanding the principles of physics.*

### **rebut/refute**

To rebut is to argue to the contrary. To refute is to disprove. However, refute can also mean to deny the truth or accuracy of, as in "refute the allegations."

### **regardless**

This is a word. Irregardless is nonstandard and should be avoided.

### **RSVP**

Always use RSVP, not rsvp or R.S.V.P. Never say please RSVP; this is redundant.



**shall/will**

Shall is used for the first-person future tense.

*I shall be indisposed in the days following my surgery.*

If will is used for first-person future, it expresses his or her determination or consent. At other times, will is used for the second- and third-person future tense.

*Although I have a cold, I will attend the luncheon tomorrow.*

**theater/theatre**

In references to departments or proper nouns that use the spelling theatre, retain that spelling. In all other cases, use theater.

*Students have many opportunities to go to the theater.*

*The Pittsburgh Public Theater and City Theatre both have nice venues.*

*Charity Randall Theatre*

*Henry Heymann Theatre*

*Studio Theatre*

**toward/towards**

Toward is standard U.S. usage; towards is the predominant form in British English and should be avoided.

**use/utilize**

Use the word use. Utilize is the awkward verb form of the obsolete adjective utile.

**-wise**

Do not use this suffix to coin words such as weatherwise.

**APPENDIX 2: COMMONLY MISPELLED WORDS**

accommodate

acknowledgment  
(preferred over acknowledgement)

aesthetic  
(preferred over esthetic)

antiquated

catalog  
(preferred over catalogue)

commitment

conscience

consensus

counselor

dissension

drunkenness

ecstasy

embarrass

exhilarate

foreword

harass

hors d'oeuvres

inadvertent

indispensable

inoculate

insistent

irresistible

judgment  
(preferred over judgement)

knowledgeable

liaison

memento

millennium

nickel

occurred

occurrence

perseverance

prerogative

privilege

proceed

sponsor

tyrannous

vacuum

vilify

## APPENDIX 3: SCHOOL, COLLEGE AND CAMPUS ABBREVIATIONS

### SCHOOLS

#### **Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences (A&S)**

Subsequent references: Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences, Dietrich School  
(Note: A&S is to be used only with degree year)

#### **College of General Studies (CGS)**

#### **David C. Frederick Honors College (FHC)**

Subsequent references: Frederick Honors College

#### **School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA)**

#### **School of Public Health (SPH)**

(Note: SPH is to be used only with degree year)

Subsequent references: Pitt Public Health

#### **Pitt Business (BUS):**

(Note: BUS is to be used only with degree year)

#### **Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business (KGSB)**

Subsequent references: Katz School of Business, Katz School

#### **College of Business Administration (CBA)**

#### **School of Computing and Information (SCI)**

#### **School of Dental Medicine (DEN)\***

#### **School of Education (EDUC)**

#### **Swanson School of Engineering (ENGR)**

Subsequent references: Swanson School

#### **School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (SHRS)**

#### **School of Law (LAW)\***

#### **School of Medicine (MED)\***

#### **School of Nursing (NURS)**

#### **School of Pharmacy (PHARM)**

#### **School of Social Work (SOC WK)**

## REGIONAL CAMPUSES

#### **University of Pittsburgh at Bradford (UPB)**

#### **University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg (UPG)**

#### **University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown (UPJ)**

#### **University of Pittsburgh at Titusville (UPT)**

\* These schools grant only graduate degrees, so when listing a degree year with a graduate's name, a G is not required after the year.

**For correct ways to refer to these schools and their students and graduates, see the Student Terminology section.**

## APPENDIX 4: POSTAL INFORMATION AND STATE ABBREVIATIONS

### Envelopes

Now that computerized bar-coding and address-scanning equipment is used, the U.S. Postal Service advises against putting phone numbers, web addresses (particularly web addresses with numbers in them), or teasers that have numbers in them on envelopes or mailers. Contact the Office of University Communications and Marketing for assistance with envelope or mailer copy to ensure proper and timely delivery.

### Abbreviations

(Note: Use two spaces between state and zip code on business reply cards and on all envelopes.)

Alabama	AL	Ala.
Alaska	AK	Alaska
American Samoa	AS	American Samoa
Arizona	AZ	Ariz.
Arkansas	AR	Ark.
California	CA	Calif.
Colorado	CO	Colo.
Connecticut	CT	Conn.
Delaware	DE	Del.
District of Columbia	DC	D.C.
Florida	FL	Fla.
Georgia	GA	Ga.
Guam	GU	Guam
Hawaii	HI	Hawaii
Idaho	ID	Idaho
Illinois	IL	Ill.
Indiana	IN	Ind.
Iowa	IA	Iowa
Kansas	KS	Kan.
Kentucky	KY	Ky.
Louisiana	LA	La.
Maine	ME	Maine
Marshall Islands	MH	Marshall Islands
Maryland	MD	Md.
Massachusetts	MA	Mass.
Michigan	MI	Mich.
Minnesota	MN	Minn.
Mississippi	MS	Miss.

Missouri	MO	Mo.
Montana	MT	Mont.
Nebraska	NE	Neb.
Nevada	NV	Nev.
New Hampshire	NH	N.H.
New Jersey	NJ	N.J.
New Mexico	NM	N.M.
New York	NY	N.Y.
North Carolina	NC	N.C.
North Dakota	ND	N.D.
Ohio	OH	Ohio
Oklahoma	OK	Okla.
Oregon	OR	Ore.
Palau	PW	Palau
Pennsylvania	PA	Pa.
Puerto Rico	PR	Puerto Rico
Rhode Island	RI	R.I.
South Carolina	SC	S.C.
South Dakota	SD	S.D.
Tennessee	TN	Tenn.
Texas	TX	Texas
Utah	UT	Utah
Vermont	VT	Vt.
Virgin Islands	VI	Virgin Islands
Virginia	VA	Va.
Washington	WA	Wash.
West Virginia	WV	W.Va.
Wisconsin	WI	Wis.
Wyoming	WY	Wyo.

## APPENDIX 5: UPMC HOSPITALS

### UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh

(Use Children's Hospital or Children's on subsequent references.)

### UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital

(Use Magee on subsequent references.)

Note: There is no apostrophe in Womens.

### UPMC Presbyterian

(Do not use Presby on subsequent references.)

### Eye & Ear Institute †

(Use Eye & Ear on subsequent references.)

### UPMC Montefiore

### UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital

### UPMC Shadyside

(Do not use Shadyside on subsequent references.)

### UPMC Altoona

### UPMC Bedford

### UPMC Chautauqua

### UPMC Cole

### UPMC East

### UPMC Hamot

### UPMC Horizon - Greenville

### UPMC Horizon - Shenango

### UPMC Jameson

### UPMC Kane

### UPMC McKeesport

### UPMC Mercy

### UPMC Northwest

### UPMC Passavant - Cranberry

### UPMC Passavant - McCandless

### UPMC Pinnacle

### UPMC Somerset

### UPMC St. Margaret

### UPMC Susquehanna

Use either the full name or the hospital on subsequent references.

† If an explanation is needed for how these hospitals are related to UPMC (because UPMC is not in their names), the appropriate phrasing is: a hospital of UPMC.

## OTHER HOSPITAL REFERENCES

(not UPMC hospitals)

### VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System- University Drive

### H. John Heinz III Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center

(Do not use VA Hospital. Use VAPHS on subsequent references.)



