



---

# Editorial Writing Style Guide

---

Fifth Edition

1	WHY WE NEED A UNIVERSITY STYLE GUIDE	
2	ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	
	Academic degrees .....	5
	Ampersands .....	5
	Dates and time .....	5
	e.g. and i.e.....	7
	Examination titles.....	7
	GPA, grade-point average .....	7
	Northern Arizona University .....	7
	State abbreviations.....	7
	United States.....	7
3	ADDRESS	
	Postal address information .....	8
4	CAPITALIZATION	
	General rules.....	9
	Academic and administrative titles .....	10
	Academic degrees.....	11
	Academic departments .....	11
	Building and room names .....	12
	Course titles .....	12
	Government references .....	12
	Grades.....	12
	Regional references .....	13
	Seasons .....	13
	Semesters/sessions .....	13
	Scholarships and fellowships.....	13
	Student classification.....	13
5	INCLUSIVE WRITING.....	14

6 LISTS  
Run-in ..... 14  
Vertical..... 15

7 NUMBERS AND DATES  
General rules ..... 16  
Fractions .....16  
Multiple numbers in a sentence ..... 16  
Ordinals..... 17  
Percent.....17  
Room numbers .....17  
Telephone numbers .....17  
Years: decades and centuries.....17

8 PUNCTUATION  
Apostrophes ..... 18  
Colon..... 19  
Commas .....20  
Dashes and hyphens  
    En dash ..... 22  
    Em dash ..... 22  
    Hyphen ..... 23  
Ellipses ..... 24  
Exclamation point..... 24  
Parentheses..... 24  
Periods ..... 24  
Quotation marks..... 25  
Semicolon..... 25

9 TREATMENT OF TITLES  
Publications ..... 26  
Movies, television, and radio ..... 26  
Musical works..... 27  
Works of art ..... 27

10 WORD LIST  
Academic terminology.....28  
Misused words / common errors ..... 32

11 WRITING TIPS  
Word choice..... 43  
Voice..... 45

12 WRITING ABOUT FLAGSTAFF AND  
NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY ..... 46

13 REFERENCE  
State abbreviations..... 50  
Proofreader’s marks..... 51



A clear, consistent writing style for all of our publications strengthens Northern Arizona University's reputation and image—and is essential to effective communication. Our goal is to connect with the reader—to clearly convey a message. Inconsistent or inaccurate spelling, grammar, or punctuation can cause readers to mistrust and ignore the message.

This style guide is a resource for anyone writing university publications. Along with many other universities across the nation, we use *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th ed., as the primary authority for style, grammar, and usage. Exceptions, such as the use of the Associated Press style for numbering, are noted in this guide. We also recommend *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, 11<sup>th</sup>ed., though any standard American dictionary is acceptable.

The following guidelines will help us maintain high quality content throughout our university publications.

If you have questions, please call us.

University Marketing  
August 2018

## 2. ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

---

### Academic degrees

When incorporating degree abbreviations in text, use PhD, EdD, MA, MS, BA, and BS with no periods.

### Abbreviations and acronyms

On first reference, spell out names of schools and colleges, government agencies, associations, fraternal and service organizations, unions, and other groups. Abbreviations and acronyms are acceptable on subsequent references, but avoid cluttering your text with too many.

### Ampersands

1. Use an ampersand (&) only in official business, agency, and institutional names, or in tabular material when space is limited. Otherwise, spell out the word *and*.
2. Ampersands are permitted in official college logos, however, spell out when using the college name in text.

### Dates and time

1. Days of the week: Spell out days of the week. Where space is limited, use one of the following abbreviation systems:

Sun. or Su	Thurs. or Th
Mon. or M	Fri. or F
Tues. or Tu	Sat. or Sa
Wed. or W	

2. Months: Spell out the month. Where space is limited, such as lists, use the following abbreviations.

Jan. or Jan	May	Sept. or
Sept Feb. or Feb	Jun. or Jun	Oct. or Oct
Mar. or Mar	Jul. or Jul	Nov. or
Nov Apr. or Apr	Aug. or Aug	Dec. or
Dec		

3. Time terminology: Use lowercase with periods or small caps with no periods. Use *noon* and *midnight* instead of 12 p.m. and 12 a.m. Do not use :00 for times on the hour: 5 p.m.

am, a.m. – ante meridiem or “before  
midday” pm, p.m. – post meridiem or “after  
midda

4. Era terminology: use uppercase (preferably small caps), no periods.  
BCE – before the Common Era or before the Christian Era.  
CE – Common Era or Christian Era

e.g., i.e.

*e.g.* is an abbreviation of *exempli gratia*, meaning “for example”  
*i.e.* is an abbreviation of *id est*, meaning “that is” or “in other words” Always use a comma after either of these abbreviations.

### Examination titles

On first reference, it’s unnecessary to spell out examination titles, such as ACT, SAT, LSAT, GMAT, GRE, MAT, MCAT; use Arabic numerals for titles such as SAT-1.

### GPA, grade-point average

Use either, usually with two numbers after the decimal: 4.00, 2.25.

### Northern Arizona University

Always spell out first usage in documents and publications. In subsequent references, use the *university* or the abbreviation NAU sparingly.

### State abbreviations

1. Spelling out state names in running text is preferred; set off the state name with commas.

Northern Arizona University is in Flagstaff, Arizona, at the base of the San Francisco Peaks.

2. In lists of several state names, use the postal codes.

### United States

1. Abbreviate with no periods when used as an adjective:

US solar companies

2. Spell out in running text when used as a noun:

Her grandparents immigrated to the United States in the 1930s.

### 3. ADDRESSES

---

1. Return addresses on brochures and other publications should list the name of the university first, followed by the name of the college, school, or department, the post office box, city, state, and zip code (plus four), and, if appropriate, the area/org. code.

Northern Arizona  
University Office of the  
President  
PO Box 4092  
Flagstaff, AZ 86011-4092

2. If the logo is part of the address, it's unnecessary to write out Northern Arizona



University:

Office of the President  
PO Box 4092  
Flagstaff, AZ 86011-4092

3. All university addresses are designated by a post office box number, which is abbreviated as PO (no periods). Use US Postal Service abbreviations in addresses with zip codes.



In general

1. Capitalize only when necessary. The more words you capitalize, the more you complicate your text.

2. Capitalize the formal (complete) names of university colleges and departments:

College of Arts and Letters  
Comptroller's Office  
Office of the President

3. Do not capitalize *university* unless used within a complete, formal title.  
Northern Arizona University offers courses in a variety of disciplines through the Grand Canyon Semester.

The university partners with Grand Canyon National Park to offer courses in the field.

4. Use lowercase for informal names of departments:

financial aid office  
The college  
liberal arts

5. Use lowercase for informal names of majors, minors, emphases, and programs.

visual communication major with an emphasis in graphic design

6. Use lowercase for generic terms that precede or follow proper nouns:

San Francisco and Beaver streets  
Gabaldon and Raymond halls

### Academic and administrative titles

1. Capitalize when the title is part of the name and directly

precedes it:

Professor Ana Yazzi

2. Use lowercase when the title is a

descriptive tag:

a diligent professor, Ana Yazzi

3. Use lowercase when the title follows the

name:

Ana Yazzi, professor of  
communication

These rules also apply to titles such as president, provost, director, dean, and other academic titles.

Northern Arizona University President Rita Hartung

Rita Hartung Cheng, president of Northern Arizona  
University

Rita Hartung Cheng became president in 2013.

*Exception:* Capitalize titles that follow names in formal contexts, such as lists in the front areas of reports, programs and books (see rule 6).

4. Capitalize named chairs or professorships that include the academic title and titles such as *Distinguished Professor*.

5. Use lowercase for terms denoting roles, such as nurse, coach, citizen, or historian, when they precede a name.

6. When the academic degree functions as a title following the name in a formal context such as a list, capitalize or use the abbreviation:

Veronica Begay, Master of Arts

Tara Jackson, Bachelor of

Science Martin Rodriguez, BA

Don Juan, MS

William Wallace Covington, PhD, Regents Professor

Charles C. Avery, Professor Emeritus

## Academic degrees

1. When used as a formal degree title, capitalize the area of study.

*Formal:* In December, she graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Forestry

When a generic or informal reference, use lowercase.

*Informal:* BA in literature  
honors in liberal arts  
(abbreviated academic degrees remain upper case)

2. When spelling out the academic degree in an informal context, do not capitalize. Please note the added 's.

bachelor of science	Natalie earned a bachelor of science degree.
bachelor's degree	Steven earned a bachelor's degree in communications.
master's degree	The university offers a master's degree in biology.
doctoral degree	Sandra earned a doctoral degree in chemistry.

*Note:* Never use the plural or plural possessive—bachelors, bachelors', masters, masters'—in reference to degree names.

## Academic departments

1. Capitalize full, formal department names:

Department of Geology School  
of Forestry  
Politics and International Affairs  
History Department

2. Academic subjects remain lowercase unless they are part of the formal title or a proper noun: psychology, English, biology, ecological sciences. Also use lowercase for partial titles: chemistry, humanities.
3. In running text, capitalize full titles of institutions and departments. Use lowercase for partial titles:

The Arizona Board of Regents; the board, the regents  
The Flagstaff Symphony Orchestra; the symphony, the orchestra  
Center for Environmental Sciences and Education; the center

### Building and room names

1. Capitalize the official names of buildings. Use official names of campus buildings in formal campus publications.
2. Use lowercase for incomplete building names unless the word begins a sentence or is a formal name:  
the union  
research center  
Bilby
3. Capitalize specially designated rooms: Grand Canyon Room.  
Use lowercase when referring to a room number:

The meeting will be held in Performing and Fine Arts, room 210.

### Course titles

Capitalize official names of academic courses.

Adrienne is enrolled in Community and Global Analysis.

### Government references

Do not capitalize federal, state, or city unless part of an official name.

city of Flagstaff  
state of Arizona  
federal  
government  
Federal Communications Commission

### grades

Use the capital letters. Add *s*, to indicate plurals. To avoid confusion with the word *as*, use the apostrophe to designate plural of the letter grade A:

A's, Bs, Cs, etc.

## Regional reference

Capitalize recognized geographical regions of the country, but not general directions.

Brianna grew up in the East but moved west after visiting NAU.

The West Coast has experienced widespread beach erosion.

Our campus is in northern Arizona.

## Seasons

Use lowercase for seasons and derivatives unless they begin a sentence or are part of a formal name.

spring, summer, autumn or fall, winter, spring

The 2022 Winter Olympics will be in Beijing.

## Semesters/sessions

Do not capitalize the common names of semesters, terms, or academic sessions.

fall semester

summer

session

registration

orientation

## Scholarships and fellowships

1. Capitalize only official names.

Hooper Undergraduate Research Award

Arizona Broadcasters Association Scholarship

2. Use lowercase for unofficial scholarship names unless they are proper nouns.

broadcasters scholarship

Cowden grant

## Student classifications

Use lowercase unless part of a formal title or at the beginning of a sentence.

freshman

sophomore

junior

senior

## 5. INCLUSIVE WRITING

---

To avoid sexism, use the correct gender or use language that incorporates both sexes.

Biased:	Inclusive:
mankind	people, humans, human race, humanity
manpower	workforce
man-made	artificial, manufactured, synthetic, handmade
to man (verb)	to staff, to operate
chairman	chair (not chairperson)
chairwoman.	Avoid chairman or
the best man	the best person (or candidate) for the
job	

## 6. LISTS

---

According to *The Chicago Manual of Style*, consistency is the most important rule when constructing *run-in* or *vertical lists*. Short and simple *run-in* lists are more appropriate in the body of a sentence. Longer lists that contain several items, or contain complete sentences are better suited for *vertical lists*.

### Run-in list

1. Within a sentence, separate items in a list with commas or with semicolons if the items in the list include commas.

The freshman class consisted of students from Portland, Maine; Chicago, Illinois; San Diego, California; and Phoenix, Arizona.

2. If the introductory material is an independent clause, a colon should precede the listed items.

Minimum qualifications for the marketing position are as follows: a bachelor's degree in business or communication, a minimum of five years' experience in a related field, and excellent communication skills.

## Vertical lists

1. In formal writing contexts, introduce vertical lists with a complete clause (a grammatically complete sentence) followed by a colon.

These are a few of the benefits Northern Arizona University's Mountain Campus:

- a balance of teaching, research, and service;
- education and career preparation for students from all demographics; and
- a four-season climate.

2. For web content and informal contexts, it's acceptable—and in most cases preferable—to introduce a list with a phrase followed by a colon and to omit end punctuation.

NAU Mountain Campus benefits:

- a balance of teaching, research, and service
- education and career preparation for students from all demographics
- a four-season climate

3. Use parallel phrasing for entries in a list. International students must fulfill requirements for admission:
  - present academic transcripts
  - pass the TOEFL exam
  - show access to financial support

4. For numbered lists, like this one, use a period after each number and begin each entry with a capital letter—even if the entry is not a complete sentence.

5. Use bulleted lists mainly for instructional or promotional material.

6. When each item in a group of unnumbered items is an incomplete sentence, begin with lowercase letters, and do not use periods. (See item 2 above.)

7. In formal writing, if a list completes a phrase that introduces it in running text,
  - punctuate as you would a sentence without bullets;
  - begin items with lowercase letters;
  - use commas, semicolons, and parentheses as appropriate;
  - close the final item with a period.

*Note: When writing copy for the web, fliers, and most brochures, omit end punctuation in lists.*



### General rules

1. Spell out numbers that begin a sentence:

Thirty-two students received the Gold Axe Award.

2. Spell out numbers used in a casual sense:

“I must’ve heard that story a hundred times.”

3. Use numerals for numbers 10 and greater and spell out numbers one through nine, with these exceptions:

- addresses: 3 Knoles Dr.
- ages, for people and objects: 2-year-old boy, 1-year-old book
- credit hours: 9 credits of required courses
- dates: January 8
- dimensions: 5 feet high, 4-by-9 inches
- highways: Route 5
- millions, billions: 6 million students
- money: 5 cents, \$7
- percent: 5 percent (running text),  
5% (scientific text or tabular material)
- temperatures: 9 degrees
- times: 9 a.m.

### Fractions

Spell out and hyphenate fractions: four-fifths, three-fourths, two-thirds, one-half.

### Multiple numbers in a sentence

If a sentence includes multiple numbers that apply to the same thing or category, and if one of the numbers requires a numeral (10 or greater), use numerals for all the quantities of that category.

Candidates for the faculty senate include 7 engineering and science professors, 6 arts and letters professors, 11 education professors, and 15 professors from three other disciplines. (Spell out *three* because it identifies disciplines rather than faculty members.)

## Ordinals

Spell out ordinals first through ninth used to indicate time or place.

He ranked third among 300 applicants.

The twentieth century saw remarkable progress in technology and medicine.

## Percent

Use the word *percent* with the numeral. Use the percent sign (%) only in scientific, technical, or statistical copy.

Professor Small found that 63 percent of the student enrollment is female.

Water temperatures have increased 17% – 22% in coastal zones.

## Room numbers

Room numbers should follow the name of the building. Both examples are acceptable. Do not capitalize room.

The history department office is located in Liberal Arts  
219. The meeting will be held in Adel Mathematics,  
room 150.

## Telephone numbers

Drop parentheses for area codes.

928-555-5555

## Years: decades and centuries

1. In running text, spell out the decade or use the full numeric decade. Drop the 's in numeric decades.

the nineties  
the 1990s

2. Use the abbreviated numeric decade format only in informal copy or in lists where space is limited. Do not use an abbreviated format if it creates any confusion about the century.

the '80s

3. Unless referring to the century changes, inclusive years should be styled with only the last two digits of the second number.

1999–2000                      2001–02

---

## Apostrophes

### 1. Use the apostrophe to

- indicate omitted letters in contractions:  
doesn't, can't, she'll, they're;
- show possession for nouns:  
a day's rest, a professor's grading scale, everyone's campus,  
women's rights.

### 2. For singular words ending in the sibilant (s, x, z) sound, such as James or Moses, omit the final *s* to prevent an awkward repetition of sound:

James' computer  
Anais' most famous  
book

### 3. For plural possessives ending in *s*, add the apostrophe at the end; for those not formed by *s*, add 's:

musicians' instruments  
children's programs  
several groups' issues

### 4. Use the apostrophe in the plurals of small letters; for capital letters used as words for letter grades, just add *s* to form the plural.

*Exception:* To avoid confusion with the word *as*, use the apostrophe to designate plural of the letter grade *A*.

Tennessee's final two e's make rhyming easy for lyricists.  
All A's will put you on the dean's list, but Cs and Ds will disqualify you.

### 5. Form possessives of abbreviations as you would for spelled-out nouns. Singular possessive:

SAT's standards  
NAU's teams  
MLA's guidelines

### 6. Use the apostrophe to indicate omission of the first two digits in a graduation year.

Dana Turner (SBS '99)

### 7. Use the apostrophe in Presidents' Day, but not in Veterans Day.

---

8. Do not use the apostrophe to form the plurals of figures, years, or abbreviations. 1500s, 1960s, the late '90s, CDs
9. Do not use the apostrophe for
  - personal pronouns: I, we, you, he, she, it, they;
  - possessive pronouns: my, our, ours, your, yours, his, hers, its, theirs;
  - plural nouns that are not possessive: tomatoes, services, rooms.

## Colon

1. Use the colon as you would a semicolon between independent clauses when the second clause amplifies or illustrates the meaning of the first clause.

Larissa manages her time wisely: she studies four hours daily after classes, exercises one hour each morning, and hikes, bikes, or skis with friends on weekends.

2. Capitalize the first word following a colon when it begins the first of at least two complete sentences.

Al cited the reasons for conservation: Temperatures are rising. Polar ice caps are melting. Floods and droughts are increasing the outbreak of disease.

Otherwise—when the first word after a colon begins a phrase or single independent clause—use lowercase.

A college degree is worth pursuing: according to the Economic Policy Institute, in 2015 college graduates earned 56 percent more than those with only high school diplomas.

3. Use colons to introduce a series or a list that is preceded by a grammatically complete clause.

Watson wants to take three courses next semester: criminal justice, American history, and study skills.

4. In running text, avoid unnecessary colons, particularly after *include/including* and forms of the verb *to be*.

*Correct:* The popular courses are Programming Techniques, Feminist Justice, and Unity of Life I: Life of the Cell.

*Incorrect:* The popular courses include: Programming Techniques, Feminist Justice, and Unity of Life I: Life of the Cell.

## Commas

1. Use the comma to separate independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction—*and, but, nor, or, so, and yet*—in *compound sentences*.

Carly was active in the American Democracy Project, and she credited that involvement with her success on Capitol Hill.

2. Use a comma—the serial comma—before *and* and *or* in a series of more than two items.

The College of Environment, Forestry, and Natural Sciences leads efforts to restore Arizona’s forests, discover new methods for treating cancer, reveal planets outside the solar system, and investigate the causes of global climate change.

If you incorporate multiple series in a sentence, use semicolons to separate the series.

The university’s brand image has a standard color palette of true blue and gold; restrictions for use of the mark, typography, and signage; and conventions for layout of letterhead, envelopes, and business cards.

3. Use a comma after the city and state in the middle of a sentence.

Flagstaff, Arizona, is at the base of the San Francisco Peaks.

4. Use a comma following the day and year in a complete date, but omit the comma when citing only the month and year.

The concert took place on Tuesday, January 23, 2018, at Ardrey Auditorium. The Schultz Fire burned more than 15,000 acres in June 2010.

5. Use a comma to set off nonrestrictive elements, but not restrictive elements.

*Nonrestrictive:*

Professor Martinez, who understands theory, responded appreciatively. *Roget’s Thesaurus*, too tattered to read, lay on the shelf. Kiersten, Sam’s friend, graduated last spring.

*Restrictive:*

Any professor who understands theory would respond appreciatively. An old book too tattered to read lay on the shelf. Sam’s friend Kiersten graduated last spring.

6. Do not use a comma between last names and Jr., Sr., II, III, etc. Jeffrey Mark Wiley Jr.

## Dashes and hyphens

### En dash

The en dash is the width of a letter *n*—about as wide as a hyphen and a half. Use en dashes to do the following:

1. Connect numbers and, occasionally, words:

Her years at NAU, 1999–2003, were the most inspiring she’d experienced.

See the text on pp. 82–92.

The sessions meet weekdays, 9:30–10:45 a.m.

The Flagstaff–Phoenix shuttle leaves four times daily.

2. Indicate an ongoing activity:

Green Party activities (2001–) brought more than 1.4 million voters to the polls in 2016.

3. Link a city to university when multiple campuses exist:

Northern Arizona University–Kingman

Northern Arizona University–Scottsdale

### Em dash

The em dash is the width of a letter *m*—about twice as wide as a hyphen. Use em dashes to do the following:

1. Set off explanatory elements:

Every student—resident, commuter, online—must fulfill the same requirements.

The president—a lifelong history scholar—cited the differences between Jefferson and Adams.

She studied a variety of topics about the region—language, culture, geology—before visiting Chile.

2. Show sudden breaks or emphasis:

The jewelry—she wore it only for this annual event—was made by her Navajo ancestor more than two centuries ago.

## Hyphen

The hyphen connects or divides words and word elements:

1. Hyphenate compound adjectives:

third-century literature  
quasi-impressionistic art  
bright-green leaves

*Note:* Do not use a hyphen after words ending in *-ly*: highly dedicated professors.

2. Hyphenate a compound with the prefix *well* before the noun.

The well-known athletes train here.  
The athletes who train here are well known.

3. Hyphenate temporary compounds. anti-

intellectual  
off-the-wall  
post-homecoming

*Note:* Consult a current dictionary or style manual to verify compound words.

4. Use the hyphen to separate number and word constructions.

312-555-5555  
non-English-speaking countries  
poverty-stricken refugees

5. Use the hyphen to divide words at line-ends. If the line has space for one or more syllable, but not for the whole word, use the hyphen to divide the word between syllables. If you are not certain where one syllable ends and the next begins, refer to your dictionary.

### Ellipsis

1. Use three points (an ellipsis), with a space before and after, to indicate text omitted within a sentence.

He said that she “will continue the lecture series . . . when she returns from sabbatical.”

2. To indicate omitted material after the end of a sentence, use the period plus three points.

Laura admired the entire program. . . . Her research showed none like it in the nation.

3. Generally, avoid using an ellipsis at the beginning or end of quoted material unless you wish to emphasize that the quote is partial.

### Exclamation point

Use sparingly to show strong emotion, surprise, or disbelief.

### Parentheses

If a dependent clause or phrase is in parentheses, put final punctuation outside the final parenthesis. If the parentheses enclose an entire sentence, put final punctuation inside the closing parenthesis.

Julia enrolled in the class, thinking the assignments would be easy (but she was wrong).

Jeremy advised his student to study in the Grand Canyon. (He wanted students to engage more in field research.)

### Periods

1. Use the period to end declarative—and some imperative—sentences.

*Declarative:* We all need to prioritize our tasks.

*Imperative:* Prioritize your tasks.

2. Use the period after some abbreviations.

## Quotation marks

1. Place quotation marks outside of commas and periods, but inside of semicolons and colons.

“When I move to Arizona,” Schuler told me, “I’ll buy good hiking boots.”

The guide shouted out the age of the rock strata lining the canyon: “Precambrian, Paleozoic, Cenozoic”; however, the roar of the rapids drowned his words.

2. Place question marks and exclamation points inside quotation marks if the quote is a question or outside if not.

Did you read Hemingway’s short story “The Short Happy Life of Francis McComber”?

She asks this question every semester: “How does the punctuation change the meaning of the title?”

While scanning the list, he blurted out, “Look at the amount of reading required!”

She asked, “Does the syllabus include ‘A Good Man Is Hard to Find’?”

3. Use quotation marks to enclose titles of short stories, articles, poems, individual chapters in books, songs and other short musical compositions, and radio and television shows.
4. Italicize titles of books, paintings, sculptures, films, magazines, plays, CDs, albums, operas and other complete musical works, newspapers, and continuing radio and television shows.

## Semicolon

1. Use the semicolon between closely connected independent clauses that are not joined by a coordinating conjunction (*and, but, for, or, nor, so, yet*).

Each semester, she receives excellent evaluations from peers; chief among those high marks is her success in stimulating critical thinking.

The professor’s instructions were clear; however, the students’ responses were not.

2. Use the semicolon to separate elements that incorporate internal commas.

The course requires readings on geography, geology, and paleontology; field trips to mountains, plateaus, and canyons; and research papers.

*The Chicago Manual of Style* convention italicizes titles of stand-alone works and sets in quotation marks titles of articles or selections from works.

### Publications

1. Italicize titles of books, journals, magazines, plays, newspapers, and freestanding publications when quoted in text or bibliographies. Always preserve original spelling, hyphenation, and punctuation.

David McCullough's best-selling biography *John Adams* was made into a television mini-series.

She receives most of her news from *Time* magazine and the *New York Times*.

#### *Exceptions:*

- Full capitals in original titles should be quoted in both upper and lower case.
  - Ampersands can be changed to *and* with editorial discretion.
2. Titles of articles, chapters, poems, and shorter works are set in roman type and enclosed with quotation marks. If quotation marks are used in the original titles, then substitute with single quotation marks.
  3. Titles of book series or editions are capitalized, but not italicized.
  4. When referring to parts of a book: preface, forward, appendix, chapter, etc., use lowercase.

### Movies, television, and radio

1. Italicize titles of movies, television, and radio shows. A single episode is enclosed in quotation marks.
2. Capitalize formal names of broadcast channels and networks.

The Discovery channels offer a variety of programs from health to the environment.

She often watches programs on Netflix and Comedy Central.

## Musical works

1. Italicize titles of operas and musicals. Set song and aria titles in quotation marks.

Handel's *Messiah* includes the well-known "Hallelujah" chorus.

"The Story of Tonight" is a show-stopping number performed in Lin-Manuel Miranda's musical, *Hamilton*.

2. Italicize album/CD titles. Set individual songs in quotation marks.
3. Instrumental music such as symphonies, quartets, rhapsodies, etc., that also include a number or key signature in the title should be capitalized, but not italicized. Descriptive titles of the same work can be italicized.

*Note:* The number (no.) or opus (op.) of the work is lowercase.

Beethoven's Symphony no. 3; or Third Symphony; or *Eroica Symphony*

Chopin's Nocturne in E-flat

Major Etude in G Minor, op. 33

## Works of art

1. Italicize names of paintings, sculptures.
2. Set titles of photographs in quotation marks.
3. Italicize titles of cartoons and comic strips.

### Academic degrees

1. When used as a formal degree title, capitalize the area of study.

*Formal title:* Earn your BA in Applied Communication from Northern Arizona University.

When a generic reference, use lowercase.

*Generic reference:* Anna earned her BA in communication, but she skipped the commencement ceremony.

2. The Office of Academic Administration recommends:

- a. using a hyphen when citing the area of emphasis after the degree title in lists

MS Chemistry – Biochemistry

BS Chemistry – Preforensic Chemistry and Criminalistics

BSEd English – Secondary Education

- b. spelling out generic references or formal titles in running text

*generic reference:* Michele completed a bachelor's in liberal arts in December.

*formal title:* Northern Arizona University offers all classes for the Bachelor of Arts in History completely online.

3. Master and bachelor take 's only when used in place of *master of* or *bachelor of*. Never use the plural or plural possessive with master's or bachelor's.

master of applied communication

master's in history

Abby will complete work for her master's degree in May.

The students in the scholarship program earned bachelor's degrees.

alumna, alumnae, alumnus, alumni

*Alumna* – a female graduate or former student of a particular institution; the female plural is *alumnae*.

*Alumnus* – a male graduate or former student; the male plural is *alumni*.

To indicate both sexes, use *alumni* or the informal *alums*.

class or course

A *class* is a day's worth of material; a *course* is a semester's worth.

I'm not going to class today.

I'm glad I took that course.

### coursework

Now one word.

The students found the coursework challenging.

### dean's list

Unless it opens a sentence, use lowercase.

### faculty

*Faculty* can be plural or singular, depending on the intended use. If referring to the members acting together as a collective group, it's singular.

If the reference is to members acting individually, it's plural.

*Note:* Access listings for faculty and staff in the Northern Arizona University Information Directory and online from the NAU Directory.

### freshman, freshmen

*Freshman* can function as a noun or an adjective. *Freshmen* functions only as a noun.

Freshman enrollment increased.

*Not:* Freshmen enrollment.

### GPA, grade-point average

Use either, with two numbers after the decimal: 4.00, 2.25.

### grades

Use the capital letters. Add *s*, to indicate plurals. To avoid confusion with the word *as*, use the apostrophe to designate plural of the letter grade A:

A's, Bs, Cs, etc.

### homecoming

Capitalize only when a formal title: NAU Homecoming.

### off campus, on campus

Hyphenate only when using as an adjective, not as an adverb.

Off-campus students commute an average of 250 miles weekly.

Those who live on campus travel to visit their families three or four times per semester.

### student classifications

Unless part of a formal title, student classifications are lowercase.

freshman, sophomore, junior, senior

### semesters

Do not capitalize the common names of semesters, terms, or academic sessions.

fall

semester

registration

orientation

### scholarships and fellowships

Capitalize only official names.

Cowden Microbiology Scholarship

Arizona Broadcasters Association Scholarship

### titles

1. Italicize titles of books, paintings, sculptures, films, magazines, plays, albums, operas and other long musical works, newspapers, and continuing radio and television series.
2. Use quotation marks for titles of minor works: short stories, essays, short poems, songs, articles in periodicals, chapters in books, and episodes in radio and television series. (see Treatment of Titles, p. 24)

a, an

1. In general use *a* before a consonant sound, *an* before a vowel sound. Use *a* before a pronounced *h*, long *u* (or *eu*), and *o* as pronounced in one.

a one-on-one  
meeting a history  
thesis  
a  
euphemism  
a union

2. Use *an* when the *h* is not pronounced, as in “an honor student.”
3. When a group of initials begins with a vowel sound (even if the first letter is actually a consonant, such as *f* or *m*), use *an* before the initials.

an MBA graduate  
an F in calculus  
an NAU professor

4. When preceding a number, the choice between *a* and *an* is the same as if the number were spelled out.

an 18 percent increase  
a 15 percent decrease

advance, advanced

Used as adjectives, *advance* means “ahead of time” and *advanced* means “beyond others.”

advance application fee  
advanced standing

adviser, advisor

NAU uses *advisor*.

**affect, effect**

*Affect* is a verb, except when used as a term in the field of psychology to indicate emotive responses. *Affect* commonly means “to influence.”

Study habits affect grades.

*Affect* can also mean “to simulate, imitate, or pretend.”

As an international student in London, Donna affected a British accent.

*Effect* is commonly used as a noun meaning *result*.

Her attendance policy had a good effect.

As a verb, *effect* means “to bring into existence or accomplish.”

Writing your congressman is one way to effect change.

**among, between**

*Among* indicates the interval, intermediate position, or relationship of more than two people or things; *between* implies only two:

The money will be divided among the seven members. Andrew split the money between Joan and Harold.

*Note:* One item in a pair may be a group of individuals.  
Sandra raved about the rapport between Professor Summerfield and her students.

*Between* may also indicate pairs of relationships among more than three items.

The debates continued between students.  
(Note that several debated, but only in pairs.)

**and, but**

You may use *and* or *but* to begin a sentence. Used sparingly, these conjunctions can provide effective transitions between closely related sentences.

assure, ensure, insure

*Assure* means to convince someone or set a person's mind at ease. Her professor assured her that she could enroll in the course.

*Ensure* means to guarantee or secure.

Good study habits ensure better grades.

*Insure* generally means to establish a contract involving money.

Though she drove only on campus, her brother persuaded her to insure her car.

bad, badly

*Bad* is an adjective: She recorded a bad track. *Badly* is an adverb: She sings badly.

A common error is use of the adverb in constructions with linking (transitive) verbs, such as *look*, *taste*, and *feel*.

Use the adjective to modify subjects taking linking verbs: I feel bad about the outcome.

(Since *feel* acts as a linking verb, the adjective *bad* modifies the pronoun *I*.)

century

Lowercase: eighth century, 15th century, 21st century.

complement, compliment

*Complement*, as a noun, means something that completes, fills out.

The lab work is a complement to the lecture class.

As a verb, *complement* means to suit, make complete.

The lab work complements the lectures.

*Compliment*, as a noun, means an expression or act of praise or flattery.

After Ana read the poetry, members of the audience offered compliments.

As a verb, *compliment* means to praise or flatter.

The professor complimented Yvonne on the outcome of her research.

comprise, compose

*Comprise* means to consist of or include. The whole comprises the parts.

Avoid confusing *comprise* with words of nearly opposite meanings: *compose*, *constitute*, *make up*.

The whole comprises the parts. The parts compose the whole.

The university comprises nine colleges. Nine colleges constitute the university.

continual or continuous

*Continual* means a repeated occurrence, something that happens over and over.

The students engaged in continual debate throughout the course.

*Continuous* means unbroken or without interruption.

The professor lectured continuously while the students took notes.

co-op

Hyphenate co-op (cooperative) to avoid confusion with coop (a small enclosure). Similarly, hyphenate other words to avoid misunderstanding:

re-admit

re-enroll

re-creation

country, nation

Use *country* to refer to a geographical area; use *nation* to designate the people who share the language and culture of a sovereign government.

database

Use as one word.

dos and don'ts

These verbs act as nouns.

email

Drop the hyphen. Do not capitalize unless it starts a sentence or precedes the address in a list.

ensure

See assure.

entitled or titled

*Entitled* means one has the right to something.

After successfully completing all her course work, she is entitled to her degree.

*Titled* introduces the name of a publication, speech, musical composition, etc.

The professor's speech, titled "Boredom," drew few listeners.

### farther or further

*Farther* refers to distance; *further* refers to time and quantity.

He drove five miles farther down the road, missing the turn.

Projecting further into the future, she saw herself advancing up the corporate ladder.

### fax

Use fax in lowercase unless it begins a sentence.

### fewer, less

Use *fewer* for countable objects; use *less* for observable amounts.

Due to his research activity, he is teaching fewer courses this semester. She has less academic work than many of her peers.

### foreign words and phrases

Italicize foreign words and phrases, except for those familiar to the reader.

Many say this is the *annus mirabilis* for the university.

### Foreword

The foreword (not forward) is a book's opening essay by someone other than the book's author. A preface is an opening essay written by the book's author.

### I, me

*I* functions in the subjective case, *me* in the objective.

*Correct:* Mary and I enrolled early.

*Not:* Mary and me enrolled early. (Not: "Me enrolled early.")

*Correct:* She thought that John and I would attend the seminar. *Not:* She thought that John and me would attend the seminar. (Not: "She thought me would attend.")

Do not overcorrect and use the subjective *I* in the objective case.

*Correct:* The admissions office sent the forms to Mary and me.

*Not:* The office sent the forms to Mary and I. (Not: "They sent the forms to I.")

*Correct:* The lecture dates changed, surprising my friends and me.  
(Not: The dates changed, surprising I.)

important, importantly

Use *important* with *more* or *most* to modify a whole clause or sentence.

New buildings on campus are economically efficient. More important, they reduce toxic emissions.

Do not use *more* or *most* before *importantly*.

## Internet

Now lowercase: internet.

## irregardless

Since irregardless is not a legitimate word, use regardless.

## its, it's

As a possessive, *its* has no apostrophe. As a contraction for *it is* or *it has*, use the apostrophe to indicate omitted letters: *it's*.

Northern Arizona University's strengths include its student-centered approach. It's a university with a student-centered approach.

## lay or lie

The verb, *to lay*, meaning “to put or set down, to place, to spread on a surface” is commonly misused. *Lay* is a transitive verb.

Maria lays the book on the desk.  
She laid five dollars on the counter.  
Serena had laid the paint on the canvas.

The verb, *to lie*, meaning “to be or to stay at rest in a horizontal position, to be inactive,” is an intransitive verb.

The books lie on the shelf.  
After she left, her five dollars still lay on the counter.  
The canvas had lain undiscovered in the attic for years.

## myself, me, I

*Myself* is a reflexive (intensive) pronoun reflecting back to *I*. Do not use the reflexive pronoun *myself* in the subjective (I) or objective (me) case.

*Correct:* I wrote the paper myself.  
*Not:* Myself wrote the paper.

*Correct:* Those attending the meeting were Jim, Steven, Larissa, and me.  
*Not:* Those attending the meeting were Jim, Steven, Larissa, and myself.

*Correct:* The provost gave the report to Alberto and me.  
*Not:* She gave the report to Ralph and myself.

The same applies to herself, himself, yourself. She bought the book herself.  
Do the research yourself.

## online

Do not hyphenate this word.

## pre and post

Most words beginning with the prefixes *pre* and *post* are not hyphenated. Refer to the dictionary for appropriate spellings.

## résumé/resume

Use *résumé* to indicate a summary of accomplishments or a curriculum vitae; use *resume* when you mean “to return to or to begin again.”

## seasons

Lowercase seasons and derivatives unless they begin a sentence or are part of a formal name.

spring, summer, autumn,  
winter wintertime, springtime  
Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympic Games

## that or which

1. *That* refers to persons or things, *who* to people or animals, and *which* only to things or non-human entities.

The person that teaches Greek is my sister, or the person who teaches Greek is my sister.

The class that draws the most students is Contemporary Film.

She bought *Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary of English Usage*, which details many rules.

2. *That* introduces restrictive clauses. *Which* or *that* may introduce nonrestrictive clauses, but, in current usage, *which* is preferred.

We will visit the canyon that harbors 277 miles of the Colorado River. (Since we do not name the canyon, the clause is restrictive—it identifies it.)

We will visit the Grand Canyon, which harbors 277 miles of the Colorado River. (Since we identify the Grand Canyon, the clause is nonrestrictive.)

toward

Use *toward*, the preferred form in American English although the British prefer *towards*. The same applies to *afterward*, *backward*, *downward*, *forward*, and *upward*. However, the use of *afterwards* and *backwards* is commonly accepted in American English.

web master, web page,

Each construction consists of two words.

### website

Use as one word.

### who, whom

1. Use *who* in the subjective case.

Subject: *Who* took the report?

Predicate after a linking verb (often a form of *to be*): She is the exceptional student *who* earned a merit scholarship.

2. Use *whom* in the objective case as the object of a verb or

preposition: Tom wrote the paper for *whom*?

The professor failed *whomever* he found cheating.

When unsure about which to use, substitute *he/she*, *her/him*, or *they/them* for *who* or *whom*. If *he*, *she*, or *they* is correct, use *who*; if *him*, *her*, or *them* is correct, use *whom*.

The student, *who* (she) has a 4.00 GPA, earned the scholarship. Tom wrote the paper for *whom* (him)?

### web

1. Capitalize World Wide Web, the formal name.

2. Lowercase for other uses: web, web master, website.

### www

When providing a URL for marketing purposes, omit the <http://www>. Most users are savvy to web language, so to reduce clutter in your text, omit when possible.

*Note:* To simplify an existing URL, submit a request at **[nau.edu/redirects](http://nau.edu/redirects)**. As with telephone numbers, always test URLs before publishing.

### Word choice

“Contrary to what some people seem to believe, simple writing is not the product of simple minds. A simple, unpretentious style has both grace and power. By not calling attention to itself, it allows the reader to focus on the message.”

—Richard Lederer and Richard Dowis, *Sleeping Dogs Don't Lay*, 1999

Often you can replace “big” words with shorter—even more expressive—alternatives. Simpler words typically make your message more readable.

abundance – plenty  
 accommodate – adapt, allow, adjust,  
 fit at that point in time – then  
 at the present time – now  
 accomplish – achieve, perform, succeed  
 accordingly – so  
 additional – added, more,  
 extra additionally – and, also  
 advance planning – planning  
 approximately – about, almost,  
 nearly ascertain – check  
 conclusion – end  
 demonstrate –  
 show endeavor –  
 try frequently –  
 often  
 in conjunction with –  
 with in order to – to  
 initiate –  
 begin inquire  
 – ask  
 necessitate – require, force  
 obtain – get  
 period of time – time, period  
 provided that, in the event that –  
 if purchase – buy  
 regardless of the fact that –  
 although terminate – end, close,  
 stop, halt  
 Sunday, Monday timeframe – Sunday,  
 Monday utilize – use

Exceptions to the “keep it simple” rule: a person may be unsuitable for a particular job or office, but not unfit. Choose the best word for each situation.

## Voice

*active voice* – The subject performs the action the verb conveys: John calculates the solution (subject-verb-object).

*passive voice* – The object of the action becomes the subject. The passive voice always contains a form of the verb to be or to get. The subject-verb-object order is inverted; the direct object becomes the subject.

The solution was calculated correctly.

*Better:* Tammy calculated the solution.

The class is being taught by a visiting professor.

*Better:* A visiting professor teaches the class.

Avoid using the passive voice unnecessarily; it creates wordy constructions and often introduces ambiguity about who performed the action.

## 12. WRITING ABOUT FLAGSTAFF AND NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

When writing for Northern Arizona University publications, especially recruitment material, include information about the Flagstaff campus and surrounding area. To find the latest details on the Flagstaff and the university,

visit [nau.edu/about](http://nau.edu/about).

### About Flagstaff

Flagstaff is northern Arizona's largest city, with a population of about 70,000. At 7,000 feet, the city is dominated by the majestic San Francisco Peaks, whose highest point is 12,633 feet, and is surrounded by national forests, including aspen stands and the largest contiguous ponderosa pine forest in the world.

Summers are cool and comfortable; winters offer sunny days and abundant snow. With its relatively mild, four-season climate, Flagstaff offers excellent conditions for study and recreation.

The city boasts a friendly, small-town atmosphere combined with outstanding cultural, scientific, and recreational opportunities. Within a two-hour drive of Flagstaff are the Sonoran Desert at an elevation of 2,000 feet, the red rocks of Sedona at 4,000 feet, and an alpine forest at 11,000 feet. The area includes many national parks and monuments with rich historical significance, including Grand Canyon National Park.

### About Northern Arizona University

Founded in 1899, Northern Arizona University is one of the premier campuses in the West whose primary focus is undergraduate education. Through the years, our mission has expanded to include innovative graduate programs, aggressive research, distance learning, and service to communities throughout the state of Arizona.

Our commitment to education is exemplified by a strong focus on teaching and close interaction between students and faculty. Hallmarks of our teaching

---

tradition are relatively small classes, personal attention, and individualized learning. This educational experience is enhanced by an atmosphere that celebrates diverse opinions and cultures. The primary training ground for Arizona teachers for more than a century, Northern Arizona University's College of Education consistently ranks among the top in the nation for degrees earned by Native Americans and minorities.

Undergraduates participate in real-world projects and research in the natural sciences, engineering, business, the social sciences, communication, and the arts. Surrounded by the largest contiguous ponderosa pine forest in the world, Northern Arizona University gives students hands-on research opportunities in the cutting-edge discipline of ecological restoration. Our graduates work at the forefront of natural resource management, setting national and international standards for resource development practices.

A commitment to student success, personal service, dedicated faculty, and a robust technical infrastructure have made Northern Arizona University a leader in providing distance education for decades. In addition to undergraduate degrees, students can choose from more than graduate, certificate, and endorsement programs that increase their earning potential and give them skills to improve the quality of life in local and global communities.

## 13. REFERENCE

Capitalize the official names of buildings and specially designated rooms. (Note: du Bois Center.)

In lists of several state names, use the postal codes.

STATE	POSTAL CODE	STATE	POSTAL CODE
Alaska	AK	Nevada	NV
Arizona	AZ	New Hampshire	NH
Arkansas	AR	New Jersey	NJ
California	CA	New Mexico	NM
Colorado	CO	New York	NY
Connecticut	CT	North Carolina	NC
Delaware	DE	North Dakota	ND
Florida	FL	Ohio	OH
Georgia	GA	Oklahoma	OK
Guam	GU	Oregon	OR
Hawaii	HI	Pennsylvania	PA
Idaho	ID	Rhode Island	RI
Illinois	IL	South Carolina	SC
Indiana	IN	South Dakota	SD
Iowa	IA	Tennessee	TN
Kansas	KS	Texas	TX
Kentucky	KY	Utah	UT
Louisiana	LA	Vermont	VT
Maine	ME	Virginia	
	VA	Maryland	MD
		Virgin Islands	VI
Massachusetts	MA	Washington	WA
Michigan	MI	West Virginia	WV
Minnesota	MN	Wisconsin	WI
Mississippi	MS	Wyoming	
	WY	Missouri	MO
Montana	MT	District of Columbia	DC

# PROOFREADER'S MARKS

Instruction	Text Mark	Marginal Mark
Insert Text	keep <sup>^</sup> simple	/it
Replace text	a wealth <del>for</del> talent	/of
Delete Text	the difference <del>is</del> that matters	∅
Delete/Close Space	make a difference	⊘
Leave Unchanged	he was <del>not</del> amused	⊙ (STET)
Insert Period	of time <sup>^</sup> There are	⊙
Insert Comma	thoughtful <sup>^</sup> concise essay	⊙
Insert Colon	please bring <sup>^</sup> two signed	⊙
Insert Apostrophe	it's a lovely painting	↓
Insert Quotations	<sup>^</sup> Come here, <sup>^</sup> she said	↙ / ↘
Insert Parentheses	Jane Doe, Class of '95 <sup>^</sup>	€ / ₤
Insert Ellipses	remaining in deep thought <sup>^</sup>	⊙⊙⊙
Insert Hyphen	world <sup>^</sup> renowned novelist	=
Insert Em Dash	perfect race <sup>^</sup> fast and exciting	⌊ / ⌋
Insert En Dash	attended NAU 1997 <sup>^</sup> 1999	⌊ / ⌋
Spell Out	brochures weighed 20 (lbs)	⊙ sp
Wrong Font	have a (wonderful) day	⊙ wf
Make Italic	Use <u>whom</u> instead of <u>who</u>	⊙ ital
Make Bold	meeting will <u>not</u> take	⊙ bf
Make Bold and Italic	meeting will <u><i>not</i></u> take	⊙ bf + ital
Make Roman	meeting will ( <u>not</u> ) take	⊙ rom
Make Light Face	meeting will ( <u>not</u> ) take	⊙ lf
Make Small Caps	invasion took place in 400 <u>BC</u>	⊙ sc
New Paragraph	a new generation. <sup>¶</sup> The time	⊙ ¶

Instruction	Text Mark	Marginal Mark
Capitalize	Richard <u>n</u> ixon	cap
Cap and Small Cap	<u>ronald reagon</u>	cap + sc
Make Lower case	Jimmy C <u>A</u> rter	lc
Make Lowercase	John F. K <u>E</u> NNEDY	lc
Move to Next Line	during this <u>tran-</u>	runover
Move up From Next Line	during this tran- sition from	move up
Transpose Letters	it was <u>fo</u> m a later work	tr
Transpose Words	will/ <u>be</u> not/ <u>known</u>	tr
Move Text	submit your application (quickly)	tr
Center text	] Annual Report [	center
Indent Text	] Once upon a time	indent
No Indentation	[ Once upon a time	flush
Move Text Right	Annual Report ]	]
Move Text Left	[ Annual Report	[
Lower Text	our <u>program</u> , prepares	]
Raise Text	our <u>program</u> prepares	]
Align Text Horizontally	Skydome is <u>hōmē</u> to	align
Align Text Vertically	In the summer months many folks vacation at Lake Powell	
Add Space	the canyons <u>provide</u> endless	#
Close Up Space	countless <u>trails</u> await	⊂
Increase Leading	he planned to attend <u>the concert after work</u> #	#
Decrease Leading	she gave a terrific performance despite her nerves	reduce #