

News Style Sheet

AP-based house style for news releases and news-related texts

Why will this style be used?

The “News Style” is used in all press releases issued by the university. The style follows many rules dictated by the Associated Press Stylebook, and while the university has made several specific changes, this style helps media outlets easily and quickly adapt our releases for their use.

News Style is used to contact any audience member, whether they are a prospective student, faculty and staff, alumni or even our external constituents (businesses, friends of the university and the general community). What they see in news releases may be the first time they ever read about UW-Platteville, so style counts.

This style, like our other styles, is extremely important because these university products speak to our immediate external audiences and convey not only important information, but also our brand.

Where will this style be used?

This style is primarily used for news releases or other pieces meant for newspaper.

How to use this style sheet

As you begin writing content for a project, consider this style sheet as a quick reference guide of sorts. Within every style sheet packet, you will find common elements. You will find a quick list of common, style-specific punctuation and grammar rules; a university wordlist for quick reference; and examples of where you might encounter these instances.

Questions?

Contact UW-Platteville University Information and Communications at 608-342-1526 or email Alison Parkins, content manager, at parkinsal@uwplatt.edu.

News Style Sheet

*Examples appear in italics only to typographically differentiate them from surrounding text. Never use italics in News Style.

Abbreviations and acronyms

Only use abbreviations and acronyms on first reference that are common knowledge to the public.

Includes but not limited to *NCAA*, *HIV*, *DNA*, *mph*, *Inc.*, *UFO*, *St. Louis*, *CD-ROM*.

Campus acronyms should always be spelled out on first reference, but not clarified in parentheses.

Pioneer Academic Center for Community Engagement, then *PACCE*.

Do not use parentheses to make clear an abbreviated secondary reference for later use. If an abbreviation or acronym may be unclear on second reference, spell it out.

WRONG: *The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)*

CORRECT: *The United States Department of Agriculture, also known as the USDA*

Academic Degrees

Write out names of degrees. Don't abbreviate except for Ph.D.

Such names include associate degree, bachelor's degree, master's degree, or doctorate; or Bachelor of Arts; Master of Science; Ph.D. (or doctorate).

Dr. Calvin Hobbs, a biology professor at UW-Platteville with a Ph.D. in zoology, specializes in large predatory cats.

She earned her Master of Science in education from UW-Platteville.

Alumni

alumna (singular female); *alumnus* (singular male); *alumnae* (plural female); *alumni* (plural male or mixed group)

Identify alumni by using all four digits of the graduation year. Remember the distinction between the Alumni Association and the Alumni Services office.

Doe, a 1999 UW-Platteville alumna, had a baby.

Ampersand

Don't use it, unless it's part of a proper noun.

Johnson & Johnson

City and town names

Always spell out city or town names and include the state, spelled out after the city/town, on first reference unless the city is in the dateline (see States entry for abbreviations)(see Datelines). In subsequent references of the city, you do not need to include the state.

I am from Potosi, Wisconsin, and now live in Davenport, Iowa.

Commas

Omit the comma before "of" in writing a person's name and hometown.

Jon Smith of Sandusky, Ohio, won the game.

Do not put a comma before the conjunction in simple lists.

Avoiding a case-by-case analysis makes a style simple, consistent and easy to apply.

WRONG: Avoiding a case-by-case analysis makes a style simple, consistent, and easy to apply.

Use a comma before the concluding conjunction if it is required for clarity.

I like orange juice, toast, and bacon and eggs for breakfast.

A comma must separate independent clauses.

She ran the whole race, and she couldn't stand afterward.

Use commas to set off non-essential clauses (a clause that can be eliminated from the sentence without changing the sentence's meaning). Essential clauses should not be set apart by commas.

Essential: *Managers who flounder under pressure panic at deadlines.* (Floundering managers panic.)

Non-essential: *Managers, who flounder under*

pressure, panic at deadlines. (All managers flounder; all of them also panic.)

Non-essential: *The man, who ate nickels, went blind.* (He went blind. He also eats nickels.)

Essential: *The man who ate nickels went blind.* (The nickel eater went blind because of nickels.)

When an essential or non-essential clause refers to a human being or animal with a name, it should be introduced by the words "who" or "whom." "That" is the preferred pronoun to introduce clauses that refer to an inanimate object or an animal without a name. "Which" is the only acceptable pronoun to introduce a non-essential clause that refers to an inanimate object or an animal without a name.

Composition titles

For books, movies, articles and titles of computer games, theatrical performances, songs, poems, television programs, lectures, speeches and works of art:

-Capitalize principle words including prepositions and conjunctions of four or more letter words

-Capitalize an article (the, a, an) or words fewer than four letters if it is the first or last word

-Put quotation marks around the names of all such works except the Bible and catalogs of reference material like almanacs, dictionaries, encyclopedias, etc.

"The Star-Spangled Banner"

"Grease"

"The Late Show With David Letterman"

"Of Mice and Men"

Magazines and journals are not in quotes.

The American Medical Journal

Time Magazine

Contact Information

Include the name, title, place of work, phone number and email address of contacts.

Contact: Dr. Wayne Weber, dean, UW-Platteville
College of BILSA, (608) 342-0001,
weberw@uwplatt.edu

Datelines

Datelines should include the city name, entirely in capital letters, followed by the state abbreviation. The location of the dateline on all UW-Platteville stories should be "PLATTEVILLE, Wis." followed by a dash and the story. Following the dateline, Platteville does not need a corresponding state abbreviation, because the dateline is the first reference within the story.
PLATTEVILLE, Wis. – story text.

Dates

Spell out months when not associated with a specific date.
The month of January; Jan. 1 (don't list current year); *Oct. 2, 2005* (list past or future years).
Abbreviate months as needed: *Jan., Feb., March, April, May, June, July, Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.*

Department/Unit/Office names

Department names are capitalized when the full, proper name is written out as such:

- *The Department of Chemistry is holding a reunion during Homecoming.*
OR
- *The UW-Platteville Department of Chemistry is holding a reunion during Homecoming.*

Department names are NOT capitalized when referred to generally, not using the proper name. For example:

- *The chemistry department at UW-Platteville is holding a reunion during Homecoming.*

The word "Office" is only capitalized if it precedes the office's name.

- *The Office of Multicultural Student Affairs sponsored the event.*
- *The Multicultural Student Affairs office sponsored the event.*

Take note of departments/offices/divisions that do not have "Department" or "Office" as part of their proper name and are therefore still capitalized. Examples include:

- *University Information and Communications*
- *Dining Services*
- *Divisions, such as: Student Affairs, Admission and Enrollment Services, etc.*

Directions and regions

In general, lowercase north, south, northeast, northern, etc. when they indicate a compass direction. Capitalize these words when they designate a region, unless used in conjunction with a city, state, or nation. Capitalize compass points when part of a proper name or if the section is widely known.

UW-Platteville is in Southwest Wisconsin and is part of the tri-state region; he drove south; we went to Southern California; A storm system developed in the Midwest, in southwestern Wisconsin; it will bring rain to the East Coast by morning and to the entire Northeast by late day as it heads north; West Virginia will stay dry while western Washington, D.C., will see the heaviest rains.

Exclamation mark

Use it sparingly or nothing is exciting.

Gender neutral language

Construct your sentences so you can avoid having to use gender-specific terms.

Gender specific: *A student can enroll in the class at his or her leisure.*

Gender neutral: *Students can enroll in the class at their leisure.*

Grammatically incorrect: *A student can enroll in the class at their leisure.*

Hyphens

Hyphens (-) join. Use them – without spaces – with numbers, times, the university name and compound modifiers. Many two-word phrases are two separate words used as a verb, noun or adverb. Use the hyphen when those two words are used as a single adjective, a word that describes a noun. *All-terrain vehicle; real-world experience; hands-on learning; full-time job; on- and off-campus movies; award-winning actress.*

Dashes (–) denote an abrupt change. Use dashes to attribute quotes, interject and in datelines. Leave one space on each side of a dash.

Italics

Do not use italics in News Style.

Names and titles

If someone has a Ph.D., use *Dr.* on first reference.

Lowercase and spell out titles when not used with an individual's name.

The dean provided a list of students; the professor taught a class; the chancellor will speak today at noon.

Capitalize and spell out when they precede a name.

Chancellor Dennis J. Shields; Dean Bill Hudson; Chemistry Chair Tim Zauche.

Preferably, on first reference, write the full name first, capitalize offices or areas but not specific titles

Dr. Mittie N. Den Herder, provost and vice chancellor for Academic Affairs

Dr. Amy Parsons, assistant professor

Dennis J. Shields, chancellor

Sarah Kessler, resident assistant

Or use title first, and capitalize all.

Vice Chancellor for Administrative Services Rob Cramer

Associate Professor Dr. Peter Hadorn

Chancellor Dennis J. Shields

Resident Assistant Sarah Kessler

On second reference, use last name only.

Smith was very excited.

Exception: *Chancellor Shields*

Numbers

Spell out one through nine, use numerals for 10 and up.

Always use numerals for precise measurements and ages.

Ages 5, 7 and 10; six-week period; 300-square-foot building; 300 cubic inches; \$1,000; \$6.50; 25 mph; 1 percent.

For ordinal numbers, spell out first through ninth, and use numerals and ordinal indicators (-st, -nd, -rd, -th) for the remainder. Ordinal indicators should not be in superscript.

First, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, 10th, 11th, 12th...

WRONG: 13th

Parentheses

Avoid parenthetical statements.

Phone numbers

Always include the area code.

608-342-1234

Semi-colons

Use semi-colons to break up lists with internal punctuation, including before the coordinating conjunction.

I like candy; fruit like apples, oranges and bananas; and bacon.

Group members were from Platteville, Wisconsin; Tulsa, Oklahoma; Davenport, Iowa; and Madison, Wisconsin.

States

Spell out the names of the 50 U.S. states when used in the body of a story, whether standing alone or in conjunction with a city, town, or village. No state name is necessary if it is the same as the dateline.

*The only time a state name will be abbreviated is in the dateline. (i.e., in the dateline, use "PLATTEVILLE, Wis. —")

Tense

Use past tense when issuing quotes.

She said; said the woman.

Times

When writing a time, always use numerals and “a.m.” or “p.m.” unless “noon” or “midnight” is used. If an event happens on the hour, do not include minutes. To indicate of range of times, do so by leaving no space, a hyphen and no space between the two times.

7 a.m.-5:30 p.m.; 8:15 a.m.-noon; midnight-1 a.m.; 6:15-7:15 a.m.

WRONG: 7:00 a.m.; 8:15a.m.; midnight – seven.

Underlining

Don't do it.

University names

These are the only appropriate options to write the university name.

First reference:

University of Wisconsin-Platteville

Second reference:

UW-Platteville

Capitalize colleges and schools within the university.

The program is sponsored by the College of Liberal Arts and Education. The student is in the School of Education.

Always lowercase when referring to UW-Platteville as an entity and generically.

The university (meaning UW-Platteville) has many accredited programs; She has a university education.

Lowercase college, university, school, etc., when not used in the formal context.

The college had a career fair; the school sponsored the event; the office is closed.

For colleges and universities outside the UW System, spell out the complete name of the college and follow with the state if it's not Wisconsin.

Wartburg College, Iowa; Gustavus Adolphus, Minnesota.

Second references: *Wartburg; Gustavus Adolphus.*