

By David McHam

A Compendium on Style and Spelling

Style

Based on Associated Press and other style manuals

Capitalization

1. Follow the rule that if a noun is by its usage proper, capitalize it. Otherwise, use lowercase. Lean toward lowercase. Any word or words standing alone are lowercase unless they are proper nouns. Example: The University of Houston; the university.

Academic colleges, schools and departments are uppercase: College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, School of Communication, Department of English.

Any word derived from a proper noun is itself proper: English, French, German, Russian, Chinese, Spanish. Also Latin.

But general courses of study not derived from proper nouns are lowercase: marketing, physics and computer science. She is a communication major.

Specific entities would be uppercase. Example: the marketing department of a company, as in the Marketing Department of Blank & Co.

Capitalize city council or legislature only when used with a specific city or state: Houston City Council, Texas Legislature.

Capitalize U.S. Congress, Texas Senate, but lowercase congressman, congresswoman, congressional, state senate.

2. Capitalize titles of authority or position before names but not after names or standing alone. Examples: Ambassador Jeremy Kaye; Jeremy Kaye, the ambassador; the ambassador, Jeremy Kaye.

Lower case titles when they indicate occupations or athletic positions such as teacher, secretary, defense attorney, plumber, day laborer, auctioneer, pitcher, wide receiver, architect.

Writers and editors can choose what to emphasize when using titles with names: Hans Hillerbrand, former provost of the university, or the former provost of the university, Hans Hillerbrand.

Place long titles after names: Henry Schmidt, executive vice president for marketing at Blank & Co., . . .

On first reference, use full names of persons, with initials or middle names if applicable: L. Donald Shields, Joe Bob Briggs.

Some publications use Mr., Mrs., Ms. on second and subsequent reference. Our style will be to use only the last name after the first reference. Use Mr. and Mrs. when appropriate. Use Dr. in reference to medical doctors and dentists when appropriate.

Do not, as a matter of style, use Dr. as an academic title. Academic titles are specific: lecturer, instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, professor. A part-time teacher is an adjunct professor. Refer to people who teach as teachers, not instructors or professors.

Use the Rev. before a name when appropriate on first reference. Do not use Rev. on second reference. Do not use reverend as a noun.

Capitalize and abbreviate governmental titles before names on first reference: Gov., Lt. Gov., Sen., Rep. Use congressional titles like this: Sen. Warren Rudman, R-N.H.

3. Many proper nouns have unusual spellings. Among them: NorthPark, Neiman Marcus, Macy's, Marshall Field's (Marshall Field in Chicago), Thanks-Giving Square, Deep Ellum, Fort Worth, Texas magazine, Dallas Observer (not The), Procter & Gamble, Nielsen ratings, NationsBank.
4. Use brand names and trademarks when appropriate and capitalize: Coca-Cola, Coke, Pepsi-Cola, Dr Pepper, Seven-Up, 7UP, 7-Eleven, Jeep, Rolls-Royce, Levi's, Jell-O, Q-tips, Kool-Aid, Band-Aid, Xerox, Formica, Valium, Hula-Hoop, Frisbee, Popsicle, Realtor, Laundromat, Breathalyzer, La-Z-Boy.

Also: Ferris wheel, Lalique crystal, but teddy bear.

Watch the distinction between brand names and references to what they are and do. Examples: Xerox and photocopying, Jacuzzi and water-circulating element. Note: Whirlpool is a brand name.

In some instances brand names are better used as adjectives. Examples: Kleenex tissue, Xerox copier, Dacron polyester.

Some products have corresponding brand names and generic terms: Ping-Pong, pingpong; Plexiglas, plexiglass, Fiberglas, fiberglass.

Some words that refer to products by brand name might also be used in a generic sense: windbreaker, thermos, linotype, monopoly.

5. Handle names of publications with care: Houston Chronicle, Fort Worth Star-Telegram, The Dallas Morning News, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, Dallas Times Herald, Los Angeles Times, International Herald Tribune. Watch especially titles with apostrophes in their names: Reader's Digest, Harper's, Ladies' Home Journal.

No universal policy exists on how to set the names of publications in type. Some people prefer they be set in italics; others like for the publications to stand alone. In this style, the names of publications stand alone.

6. Literary titles should be in italics. These include the titles of books, poems, plays, operas, dances, songs, hymns, movies, television programs, articles in magazines and newspapers, speeches, lectures, comic strips.

Do not italicize or use quotation marks around the names of sacred or religious books or their parts (the Bible, the Koran, Pentateuch, Deuteronomy), encyclopedias, reference books, atlases, almanacs, stylebooks.

Be especially careful to use titles correctly: *The Star-Spangled Banner*; *Cry, the Beloved Country*; *Look Homeward, Angel*.

7. Names can be elusive: The Kimbell Museum, Texas Woman's University, Johns Hopkins University, Vassar College, Kenyon College, The Citadel, The Hague, National Organization for Women, Procter & Gamble, Nielsen ratings, Tommy Hilfiger:
Mathew Brady, Frederic Remington, Frederick Douglass, Muhammad Ali. Also, Tilman Fertitta, Jim McIngvale, Rod Paige, Fayez Sarofim.
8. Religious organizations can be especially elusive: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Jehovah's Witnesses, Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), and Church of Christ, Scientist.
Note the distinction between Episcopal, an adjective, and Episcopalian, a noun: She is an Episcopalian; an Episcopal church.
Lower case personal pronouns referring to the deity: he, him, his.
Hades is capitalized, but heaven and hell are not. It's Lord's Prayer.
9. Capitalize specific regions such as West Texas, the Middle West, Middle East, the Outer Banks, Chicago's South Side, the Holy Land. Capitalize appellations such as Sun Belt, Lone Star State, Buckeye State.
Capitalize holidays and special events: Fourth of July and July Fourth (variations on July 4 and July 4th), Father's Day, Good Friday, Easter (a Sunday), Yom Kippur, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Halloween.
Do not capitalize the seasons: spring, summer, fall, winter.
10. Capitalize Democrat, Republican, Socialist, Communist, but not democratic, republican form of government, socialism, communism.
When a food includes a name relative to its origin, capitalize the name of origin but not the food: Irish coffee, Roquefort, French and Russian dressing, Boston baked beans, Swiss cheese, Vienna sausage, Waldorf salad, beef Wellington, chicken Kiev, quiche Lorraine, German chocolate cake, Black Forest cake. When the food does not depend on a proper noun for its origin, use lower case: french fries, brussels sprouts, graham crackers, french onion soup. Exceptions: Bloody Mary, Moon Pie and Fig Newton.
When a brand name is used with a type of food, do it like this: Tabasco sauce, Carnation milk, Guinness stout.
11. Assorted other matters related to capitalization:
Capitalize army and navy when referring to the specific army or navy of a country. It's Marine Corps and Marine, but naval. It's U.S. Coast Guard. GI refers to a U.S. Army enlisted man. GI originally related to a general issue uniform. The plural: GIs. A Marine is not a GI.
X-ray, Roaring '20s, World War II, 21st century, Parents' Weekend, Oscar, Pulitzer Prize, Oval Office, Scotch tape, cold war, opossum, black or African-American (in reference to race), depression (but Depression and Great Depression referring to what happened after the 1929 stock market crash), Hurricane Hazel, Mother Nature, B-1, MiG-21.
References to race, other than the words white and black, are capitalized. It's American Indian. Capitalize and hyphenate Mexican-American, Italian-American, etc. Note: A person is a Scot. But, of Scotch-Irish ancestry. It's Scotch whisky.

Abbreviations

1. The first mention of a name or organization should be complete and spelled out unless a shorter version of the name is indisputably well-known.

Avoid unnecessary abbreviations or cryptic writing. Don't write: He lives in Calif. Spell out fort, as in Fort Worth, and mount, as in Mount Pleasant.

The place names that are abbreviated are the ones with St. or Ste. in them: St. Paul, St. Louis, St. Petersburg, Sault Ste. Marie.

Do not abbreviate United States and United Nations when they are used as nouns.

2. For more than a century, typesetters, printers and wire service Teletype operators adopted a patchwork set of rules dealing with addresses, dates and states.

Our policy will differ from the wire service style in two areas:

- a. Addresses. Many publications use a style in which avenue, boulevard, expressway, freeway, highway and street are abbreviated with a numbered address.

We will not abbreviate street designations under any circumstances.

- b. Dates. Many publications use a style in which long months (August through February) are abbreviated with specific dates.

We will not abbreviate months in any situation.

Note on punctuation with dates and states: Surround the year and the state with commas, as in:

He was born on December 5, 1967, in Cleveland, Ohio.

Or, he was born in Cleveland, Ohio, on December 5, 1967.

But don't use commas around the year in: The weather here in January 1982 was very bad.

However, we will use traditional wire service style with cities and states:

Always spell the names of states when they stand alone. Follow wire service style and abbreviate most states when used with cities and towns. States with five or fewer letters are spelled out: Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah. Also, Alaska and Hawaii are not abbreviated.

Many publications use abbreviations that in some instances differ from those used by the U.S. Postal Service.

Wire service abbreviations: Ala., Ariz., Ark., Calif., Colo., Conn., Del., Fla., Ga., Ill., Ind., Kan., Ky., La., Md., Mass., Mich., Minn., Miss., Mo., Mont., Neb., Nev., N.H., N.J., N.M., N.Y., N.C., N.D., Okla., Ore., Pa., R.I., S.C., S.D., Tenn., Vt., Va., Wash., W.Va., Wis., Wyo.

Cities easily recognized don't need the names of states: New York or New York City, Atlanta, Miami, Philadelphia, Chicago, Phoenix, Denver, San Francisco and New Orleans. Washington may stand alone in some instances.

When you are working in a particular state and writing about towns and cities in that state, don't use the name of the state.

In Texas, you will not need to use Texas after Dallas, Houston, Mexia, Cranfills Gap, China Spring, Italy or Cut and Shoot.

However, when writing about some Texas towns that are not as well known as cities by the same names elsewhere, use Texas to avoid confusion. Some of those towns are Paris, Atlanta, Memphis, Detroit and Cleveland. You might have to be careful of Athens and Abilene, depending on the context.

Towns by the name of Pittsburg are found in several states: Texas, Kansas, California. But, it's Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania.

Especially note: In this style we do not usually use a comma before the word *and* in a series. However, the rule that you surround dates and states with commas supersedes the rule that you do not use a comma before the word *and* in a series.

Example: The cities were Denver, Red Lodge, Mont., and Pierre, S.D.

3. Avoid abbreviations on first reference. An exception would be when you are writing for the campus newspaper at UTA, TCU, SMU, etc.

Abbreviations may be used on second reference when they are clear: NCAA, FBI, CIA.

When abbreviations are not well-known, be careful of using them even on second reference: ERISA.

Very few abbreviations may stand alone. A few that can: TV, FM, CDT.

Do not create acronyms in an effort to shorten the name of an organization.

Wire service style is OK, but many publications use okay.

Capital-letter abbreviations generally do not have periods: NCAA, NAACP. Exceptions are U.S., U.N., U.K., U.S.S.R., N.C., N.D. and other states. Also, B.C. and A.D. Note: Do not abbreviate U.S., U.N. and states as nouns.

Lower-case abbreviations generally have periods: a.m., p.m., c.o.d., f.o.b. An exception is mph. Avoid mph, however, unless an average is involved. Otherwise use miles an hour.

Don't use abbreviations for degrees. Instead, make it bachelor's degree, master's degree, a doctorate in such and such a field.

Numerals

1. Use figures in person or animal ages: She will be 21 next month. Using years old with ages is almost always superfluous.
2. In general, spell out numbers below 10, use figures for 10 and above: one, two, three, five, eight, nine, 10, 25, 86, 104 and 3,049.

Exceptions:

- a. Spell out numbers at the start of sentences. If the number is long, reword the sentence to avoid using the number. Be careful about words used before numbers. Use *about*, not *some* or *only*.

- b. In a list of numbers, use figures.
- c. If you are writing something in which you are referring to figures, use figures.

Use a comma in numbers of more than three digits except in addresses, years, course numbers: 3,000, \$25,000, 1,000,000, 8822 Prichett Street, 1984, 2308.

- 3. Casual numbers or numbers used in hyperbole may be spelled out: I wouldn't touch that with a ten-foot pole. No, no, a thousand times, no.

Write out casual or inexact numbers in direct quotes: "I already turned down a million dollars for that piece of property," he said.

- 4. Use 20s, 30s, 90s in reference to ages and temperatures. You may use '50s, '60s, '90s as alternative ways to refer to decades.
- 5. Use figures for heights: 5 feet 2 inches; weights: 4 1/2 pounds; ruler and yardstick measurements: 9 x 12.
- 6. The style on money: 7-cent stamp, 25 cents, \$1,234, \$10 million or \$10,000,000. (don't use the word dollars).
- 7. Note the need for a hyphen when numbers are in modification: eight-hour day, five-day week, five-year plan, 24-year-old sister (but, a sister who is 24 years old; also, a 24-year-old).
- 8. Some numerical usage is a matter of style: Fifth Avenue, Big Ten, 6th Fleet, 10th Ward. Other usages are a matter of style: World War II, 21st century. Make it No. 1 son, No. 2 candidate.
- 9. Ordinal numbers follow the same style as used here: first, third, 13th, 25th, 100th. Don't use ordinal numbers in dates (August 9) except for July 4th and Friday the 13th.
- 10. Some examples of style in the use of numbers: The Rangers lost to the Yankees 6-2. Or, . . . to the Yankees, 6-2. She owned three five-room houses and a 10-room house. Interstate 35 is divided from Denton to Hillsboro.
Sergei Bubka of the Soviet Union broke his world pole vault record Saturday as he cleared 19 feet 8 1/4 inches at the Paris Track and Field Meet.

Time

Use the time of scheduled meetings, games, concerts, speeches, etc. in a simple manner such as: at 3 p.m. Wednesday. Avoid the redundancy of 8 a.m. Monday morning, etc. Don't use :00 as in 8:00, 10:00, etc.

Use noon and midnight instead of 12 p.m. (noon) and 12 a.m. (midnight).

Use time before day and time before place unless place is of greater importance: at 7:30 p.m. Saturday at Texas Stadium.

Note the difference in the need for exact time for meetings, etc. and the appropriateness of conversational time. Don't force conversational time into a strict pattern. Examples: He has 8 o'clock classes every day. They get up at 6 (or six) every morning to run.

Use future tense with scheduled time: will be, not is to be. Don't say the meeting will be held. Say, The Snapshot Club will meet at 2 p.m. Sunday.

Punctuation

1. Comma. Do not use a comma before the word *and* in a series: The woman was short, slender, blond, well-dressed and old. An exception would be if the series ended with two items: Her favorite desserts are orange sherbet, chocolate mousse, and peaches and cream.

Do not use commas in a prepositional construction: Judge Otis Brown of Arkadelphia will preside.

Use commas to enclose appositives: Smithwick, the favorite, won handily. Rogers, a junior political science major, was selected.

Use a comma to introduce material at the beginning of a sentence: In the beginning, he had only his small savings and his wit.

Some words take commas: however, therefore.

Use the comma in a compound sentence such as: Fish abounded in the lake, and the shore was lined with deer.

The comma may be omitted if the subject is understood in the second part of the compound sentence: He took the test and got into the school.

Separate scores with a comma in usages such as this: Carolina 26, Dallas 17.

Use a comma to divide figures of more than three digits (1,234), except in addresses.

Use a comma to separate attribution and a quotation:

Franklin said, "A penny saved is a penny earned."

"A penny saved," Franklin said, "is a penny earned."

"A penny saved is a penny earned," Franklin said.

Use a comma to separate attribution in a paraphrase or at the end of a paraphrase. The only time a comma isn't used in a paraphrase is when the attribution comes at the start of the sentence:

Franklin said that a good way to earn a penny is to save one.

Saving a penny, Franklin said, is the same as earning one.

A good way to earn a penny is to save one, Franklin said.

Use a comma to separate a state from the town or city: Joan Weymeyer of Walla Walla, Wash., was first runner-up.

Use a comma to separate a date: November 22, 1963, is a date we will always remember.

Note: Commas and periods go inside quotation marks. Semicolons and colons go outside quotation marks. Question marks go where they logically belong.

Especially note: Commas are used before *and* in a series to separate states from their towns and cities and years from dates: The places he considered were Hilton Head, S.C., Jackson Hole, Wyo., and South Padre Island. Three dates stand out in his mind: April 19, 1910, August 9, 1941, and May 20, 1978.

2. Period. Use the period in U.S., U.N. (as adjectives), a.m., p.m., c.o.d., f.o.b., B.C., A.D. Do not use the period in UTA, TCU, mph. Use mph only on second reference and only when miles per hour is intended – that is as an

average. When making references to speed where an average is not involved, use miles an hour.

3. Semicolon. Use the semicolon to separate a series (more than two items) of appositives. Examples of when not to use and when to use the semicolon:
 - a. The members of the committee are Mary Jones of Montpelier, Vt., Henry Smith of Poughkeepsie, N.Y., and Sid Tito of Dallas.
 - b. The members of the committee are all seniors: Mary Jones, who represents the Young Republicans; Henry Smith, who represents the Young Democrats; and Sid Tito, who represents minority organizations.
 - c. The members of the committee included Mary Jones, who represents the Young Republicans, and Henry Smith, who represents the Young Democrats.

The semicolon can be used to avoid confusion in a series:

The party consisted of B.M. Jordan; R.J. Kelly, his secretary; Mrs. Jordan; Martha Brown, her nurse; and three servants.

Note: Use a semicolon before the word and in a series.

4. Colon. Do not use a colon after a verb. The members present were (no colon) Mary Jones, Henry Smith and Sid Tito.

Exception: Use a colon or a comma to introduce a statement or a question, as in: The question is: Is Duke dead or not?

A colon may be used after a noun as in, The members of the committee were all seniors: Susan White, Kathi Fisher Watts and Janice Miller.

5. Quotation marks. Quotation marks enclose direct quotations. Quotations should be verbatim. Paraphrasing is appropriate to capture what someone said when direct quotations would be inappropriate or impossible.

Partial quotes are sometimes helpful in capturing the gist or flavor of what someone said. But, do not use quotation marks around one or two words in an attempt to point out that they are different or unusual. Don't use partial quotes this way: She said she was "fortunate" to win.

In editing, do not arbitrarily place quotation marks around material.

Quotation marks are used around literary titles when italics are unavailable. When the situation dictates the use of quotation marks, use them with books, plays, songs, movies, television programs and the like. Do not use quotation marks with the names of newspapers and magazines, religious books, encyclopedias, reference books and the like. To clarify: The names of newspapers and magazines may be italicized.

Single quotes are used inside quotation marks:

"Dallas is a great deal like the television series 'Dallas,'" she said.

"I can't believe they are reading 'Tropic of Cancer' in a class at UTA," she said.

Note: Quotation marks go outside commas and periods and inside semicolons and colons. Single quotes go outside commas and periods also. Quotation marks go either inside or outside question marks depending on

whether the quoted material is a question. This rule also applies when quotation marks are used around titles.

6. Question marks are used at the end of direct questions. If a quotation is used, the question mark is placed according to the meaning of the sentence: Did you say, "I'll get there yet"? He asked, "Must I go?"
7. Apostrophes are used in contractions to show possession, to indicate deletions, for clarity and in the spelling of some words.

In contractions: it's, you're, isn't, can't, don't, who's, John's (for John is), there's, you'll, I've, all's, let's. Be especially careful with it's and its and who's and whose.

With possession: John's, John Smith's, Smith's, as in Smith's cat.

Don't use an apostrophe with pronouns: his, hers, theirs. Note the use of plural possession: The Alexanders' cat is missing. Don't confuse a plural with a possessive. The Smiths are going on vacation.

To show possession when a proper noun ends in s, add an apostrophe: The Jones' cat is missing.

Do not use constructions in which inanimate objects are made to possess: the garage's roof, the chair's color. Instead write: the roof of the garage, the color of the chair.

Show deletions with apostrophes, as when '60s is used instead of 1960s. Don't use an apostrophe for the plural of ages or temperatures: in his 50s, temperatures in the 90s.

Other examples of deletions occur in spelling, as in rock 'n' roll, wash 'n' wear, country 'n' western, rhythm 'n' blues. Some words might use an apostrophe to indicate colloquialisms: rockin', cookin', as in "Now you're cookin' with gas," he said.

Use the apostrophe for clarity in: She made two A's and three B's. The Oakland A's. They were minding their p's and q's. These are exceptions. Otherwise, form a plural by adding an s. Make it GIs and Kappa Alphas.

Some words are spelled with apostrophes: collectors' item, athlete's foot, bull's-eye, hors d'oeuvres, maitre d', Court of St. James's. Others aren't: citizens band, Johns Hopkins.

Sometimes possession isn't absolutely necessary as in Parents' Weekend and employees' benefits. Parents in Parents Weekend could be used as an adjective and without the apostrophe. Employees' benefits could be employee benefits.

8. The hyphen. The hyphen is used in the spelling of many words and in certain constructions involving modification.

The most common categories of words requiring hyphens are:

- a. Words spelled with a capital letter: T-shirt, A-frame, X-ray.
- b. Where the hyphen is a matter of style: teen-age, drive-in, bull's-eye, runner-up, daylight-saving time, re-elect, head-on, half-staff, half-mast, avant-garde, pari-mutuel, co-respondent, etc.

As a matter of style, the prefixes well and self always take hyphens: well-known, well-dressed, well-liked, self-service, self-conscious, self-confidence, self-pity.

- c. Compound nouns: a 12-year-old, a fourth-grader, a know-it-all, an also-ran, etc.
- d. Compound adjectives: able-bodied, absent-minded, ill-tempered, etc.
- e. The hyphen is used when two words are placed together in modification in such a way that they are dependent upon each other for meaning: She wore a bluish-green dress. The team had a first-quarter touchdown. He had a know-it-all attitude. She was indeed an old-fashioned girl. They used a full-court press.
- f. Most constructions involving numbers in modification require hyphens: five-year plan, two-party system, four-color process, 60-yard pass, 100-yard dash, etc.
- g. Note the suspensive hyphen: The 5- and 6-year-olds attend classes only half a day. The third- and fourth-grade students presented the play. Walker was the scholastic champion in the 100- and 200-yard dashes.

But, in other instances hyphens aren't used:

- a. Many words that might seem to require hyphens do not: semicolon, nonprofit, nonfiction, cosponsor, cofounder, driveway, halftime, midterm, miniskirt, handmade, shortcut, seesaw, intrastate, interstate.
- b. Don't confuse constructions in which hyphens are used in modification with constructions in which hyphens are not necessary: They conducted a three-day search. The search lasted three days. They used a man-to-man defense. They talked man to man.
- c. Be especially careful with age in this regard: She is a 21-year-old senior. But: She is 21. Hyphens are used to create compound nouns involving age, as in: She is a 21-year-old. They made the trip with two 4-year-olds.
- d. While hyphens are used to create compound nouns—She is a fourth-grader—a slightly different construction would not require hyphens: She is in the fourth grade. Other examples: She is a fourth-grade teacher. She teaches the fourth grade.
- e. Do not use hyphens in: Koncak hit on six of nine field goal attempts, or: Aikman completed 14 of 21 passes for 263 yards.
- f. Do not use a hyphen when an adverb ending in ly modifies an adjective: a slightly elevated driveway.
- g. Many words are hyphenated according to their use. They may stand alone as nouns and adverbs, but they will be hyphenated in modification. Best examples: full time, part time and all time: She had a full-time job and went to school part time. Other examples: box office, dead end, hit and run, cover up. Almost any word with all follows the same pattern: all around, all clear, all out. Exception: all-star.
- h. Sometimes hyphens are necessary to avoid ambiguity: The 6-foot man-eating shark was killed. As opposed to: The 6-foot man eating shark was killed. Also: She will speak to small-business men. (Not small businessmen.)

Another example: They will select faculty members to serve on all-university committees. As opposed to: all university committees.

Note: Recover and re-cover are separate words: He re-covered the roof. Among similar words: recreation and re-creation.

9. Do not use a hyphen as a substitute for *and* or *through* in dates. Make it October 10 and 11, May 3, 4 and 5 or August 11 through 18. (Do not use *thru* as a substitute for *through* in any circumstance.)
10. Exceptions to the rule requiring hyphens in modification occur in these instances:
 - a. When an adverb modifies an adjective before a noun, as in much faster process, highly publicized event, very tempting offer, more likely candidate, etc.
 - b. When the words used in modification would not be hyphenated if they were standing alone. Examples: Sunday school, high school, state high school, heavyweight champion, heavyweight boxing champion, wide receiver, wire service, ticker tape. Here is an example of such modification: Walker was the state high school champion in two events.
 - c. When the first word or words in modification modify other words in modification and the noun. Examples: She worked about 600 voluntary hours at the clinic. And: He is a former high school debate coach. Also: Walker was the champion in two running events.

Spelling

Do not misspell sophomore, mathematics and dormitory.

Some words aren't words: momento, irregardless, reoccurrence. Be careful with anxious, disinterested. Don't use consensus of opinion. Stay away from hopefully. It's heart-rending and unkempt.

The most commonly misspelled words: commitment, consensus, supersede, remuneration, pastime, judgment, separate, recommend, cemetery, marshal, harass, embarrass, accommodate, maintenance, hindrance, relevant, grammar, nickel.

Also: quandary, plagiarism, heyday, harebrained, buses/busing, offered/offering, occurred/occurrence, recurred/recurrence, benefit/benefited/benefiting, conducive, concerted, privilege, supplement, gray, greyhound, missile, willful, occasion, acknowledgment.

Spellings involving style: a lot, all right, under way, percent, employee, weekend, lifestyle, theater, canceled, traveled, nonprofit, collectible, dietitian, pompon, cooperate, cigarette, kidnapped/kidnapping, stylebook, schoolhouse, courthouse, valor, glamour, ax. Also: nationwide, worldwide, campuswide etc., daylong, weeklong, etc., twofold, threefold, etc.

Spell adviser with an er. Also protester.

Whiskey is domestic, whisky is imported: Scotch whisky.

Spellings related to the apostrophe: athlete's foot, collectors' item, citizens band, hors d'oeuvre, maitre d', rock 'n' roll, wash 'n' wear, country 'n' western, bull's-eye.

Spellings related to the hyphen -- that is, some words that don't take hyphens and some that do: driveway, Sunday school, high school, drive-in, teen-age, teen-ager, daylight-saving time, re-elect, head-on, T-shirt, T-shaped, A-frame, X-ray, A- and H-bomb, no-man's land, first-rate, honky-tonk, all-star.

Spellings involving usage: Watch especially lie/lay and sit/set. The principal parts are lie, lay, lain, lying; lay, laid, laid, laying; sit, sat, sat, sitting; set, set, set, setting.

Also: affect/effect, compliment/complement, stationery/stationary, principal/principle, capitol/capital, advice/advise, martial/marshal, ordinance/ordnance, gibe/jibe, trusty/trustee.

Some words may be misused: oral/verbal, convince/persuade, uninterested/disinterested, anxious/eager, rebut/refute, proved/proven, lectern/podium, sewer/sewage/sewerage.

Some words are unusual, and somewhat surprising, when changed from the basic word to a plural or when adding a suffix. Among them: quizzes, winnable, programmed, monogrammed, formatting, politicking, picnicker, trafficking, panicked, panicky, mimicker, regrettable, coolly, sicked (verb).

Note also: until/till, liquefy/liquefaction, proof/prove, shelf/shelve.

Words that change according to usage: Part time, full time and all time are two words when standing alone, but are hyphenated when used in modification.

Blond is spelled without the e as an adjective and as a noun referring to a male. But it is spelled with an e when used as a noun referring to a female: blonde. Box office is not hyphenated as a noun, but is as an adjective: box-office sales. Baby-sit and baby-sitting are hyphenated, but baby sitter is two words.

Words that may be confused: a lot, till/until, it's/its, who's/whose, a vengeance, awkward, queue, playwright, harebrained, chuckhole, genre, trusty, mourning dove, milieu, milquetoast, chipmunk, short shrift, racquetball, bellwether, just deserts, raconteur, rescind, strategic, auxiliary, sherbet, heyday, plagiarism, flamenco, grateful, hearty. Madden and maddening are perfectly good words, but it's madding crowd.

Words you hear around the house:

1. Words you'd use to describe furnishings: chaise longue, trundle bed, Queen Anne chair, fluorescent lamp, Klieg light, lectern, credenza.
2. Words you'd use in the kitchen or restaurant: blue cheese, cordon bleu, hors d'oeuvres, victuals, jalapeno, smorgasbord, dessert, cereal, mayonnaise, margarine, mousse, gazpacho, kolache, chitlins/chitterlings, etouffee, cantaloupe, sherbet, croissant, spaghetti, chow mein, canape, tequila.
3. Flowers: chrysanthemum, poinsettia

Words that may be misspelled because they are mispronounced: asterisk, incidentally, drowned, similar, familiar, nuclear, kiln, sophomore, liaison, sacrilegious, wreck, mischievous, lackadaisical, government, disastrous, restaurateur, surprise, jewelry, frustrating

Words that are somewhat alike: Because they are similar in spelling or in pronunciation, many words must be used with added care: apprise/appraise, bar/barre, bare/bear, bazaar/bizarre, bite/byte, bloc/block, bologna/baloney, bridle/bridal, bus/buss, Calvary/cavalry, cereal/serial, cite/site/sight, congenial/congenital, coarse/course, discreet/discrete, disparate/desperate, elicit/illicit, fair/fare, faint/feint/feign, faze/phase, fiscal/physical, flair/flare, hanger/hangar, insure/ensure, libel/liable, lineage/linage, martial/marshal, maze/maize, morning/mourning, pair/pare/pear, pedal/peddle, pen/pin, pour/pore, pray/prey, precede/proceed, prescribe/proscribe, prophecy/prophesy, reluctant/reticent, sclerosis/cirrhosis, soar/sore, statue/statute/stature, sundae/Sunday, tenet/tenant, tract/track

-ible and -able:

deductible, admissible, permissible, accessible, irresistible, forcible, sensible, audible, flexible, reversible, edible, credible, susceptible, feasible, comprehensible, incredible, plausible

sizable, movable, indispensable, usable, livable, likable, lovable, notable, dependable, desirable, conceivable, salable, passable, impassable, kissable, inevitable, predictable, advisable, programmable, unforgivable, debatable, unforgettable, acceptable, perishable, formidable, unmistakable

-eable:

noticeable, knowledgeable, manageable, serviceable, changeable, replaceable, peaceable, chargeable, rechargeable, traceable, shakeable, mileage, impermeable, lineage (who your ancestors are). It's acknowledgment and knowledgeable.

ei and ie:

receive, seize, seizure, caffeine, leisure, weird, freight, deity, perceive, weigh, weight, protein, reign, rein, vein, veil, height, counterfeit, conceive, apartheid, seine
diesel, siege, shield, retrieve, sufficient, wiener, deficient, alien, convenient,
proficient, efficient, ancient, conscientious, inalienable, fiend, mischievous, sieve.
Also: glacier, fancier, financier, species

ant/ance and ent/ence:

relevant/relevance, resistant/resistance, preponderant/preponderance,
persevere/perseverance

defendant, maintenance

dependent/dependence, insistent/insistence, persistent/persistence,
reverent/reverence, turbulent/turbulence

recur/recurrence, consistent/consistency

superintendent

Doubling up:

Double the consonant when the final syllable is accented before a suffix beginning with a vowel, as in occur/occurred/occurring/occurrence, recur/recurred/recurring/recurrent/recurrence, deter/deterred/deterring/deterrence, regret/regretted/regretting/regrettable, forgot/forgotten/forgetting/forgettable.

Do not double the consonant when the accent falls on an earlier syllable: budget/budgeted/budgeting/budger/budgetary, benefit/benefited/benefiting, offer/offered/offering,

In some words the accent may shift according to the suffix:

refer/referred/referring/reference, prefer/preferred/preferring/preference, transfer/transferred/transferring/transference.

The consonant is doubled before a suffix beginning with a vowel, but not before a suffix beginning with a consonant. Example: commit/committed/committing/committal, commitment.

When two spellings are acceptable, prefer the shorter: canceled/canceling, traveler/traveled/traveling, totaled/totaling, equaled/equaling, leveled/leveling. But, cancelable and cancellation are the accepted spellings. And, it's enroll, enrolling, enrolled, enrollment.

Prefixes: Most prefixes don't require hyphens: nonfiction, nonprofit, interstate, halftime, intramural, bylaw, extracurricular, multicolored, transplant, prehistoric, outpatient, semiannual, cosponsor.

Hyphens are used with prefixes primarily in these instances:

1. When followed by a capital word: trans-Texas.
2. When two letters that are alike are joined: re-elect, de-emphasize.
3. When a double prefix is formed: sub-subparagraph.
4. When the prefix creates the meaning of against, former or before: anti-bias, anti-war, anti-intellectual, ex-student, pre-dawn. Among the exceptions: antibiotic, antifreeze, antitrust.

5. Well and self take hyphens as a matter of style:
well-liked, well-known, self-serving, self-control.
6. It's recover and re-cover depending upon use.

Unusual words: dillydally, highfalutin, kilter, gumption, persnickety, whit, pshaw, riffraff, foofaraw, buncombe, boo-boo, deja vu, hunky-dory, okey-dokey, traipse, mishmash, shoo-in, namby-pamby, brouhaha, finagle, nincompoop, rigmarole or rigamarole, kamikaze, ruckus, lean-to, klutz, doodads, galoot, wishy-washy, willy-nilly, flabbergast, bon vivant, kaput, fussbudget, scintilla, knickknack, bric-a-brac, kerplunk, femme fatale, hole card, glitzy, cockamamy or cockamamie, jumpin' jehosaphat, copacetic, gesundheit, mealy-mouthed, donnybrook, hullabaloo, chock-full, seesaw, teeter-totter, pizazz or pizzazz, razzmatazz, paparazzi, shtick or schtick or schtik, schmaltz or shmaltz, schmear or schmeer (as in "the whole schmear"), schmo or schmoie, schnook or shnook, shlep or shlepp (also schlep or schlepp), shlepped and shlepping, cater-cornered, caterwaul, ballyhoo, klutz, ritzy, zaftig, malarkey, kowtow, comeuppance, gobbledygook.

Also: origami, cholesterol, hysterectomy, perestroika, glasnost, the intifada.

And, shish kebab and paparazzi.

People, Places and Things

Alzheimer's disease,

Condoleezza Rice, Christiane Amanpour, Greta Van Susteren, Charlayne Hunter-Gault, Madeleine K. Albright, Phyllis Schlafly, Ivana Trump, Martina Navratilova, Mata Hari, Madalyn Murray O'Hair, Kay Bailey Hutchison,

Katharine Hepburn, Barbra Streisand, Ann-Margret, Georgia O'Keeffe, LeAnn Rimes, Ellen DeGeneres, Cybill Shepherd, Claudia Schiffer, Shannen Doherty, Sarah McLachlan, Isabella Rossellini, Alanis Morissette, Glenn Close, Patti LuPone, Joan Lunden, Riki Lake, Susan Saint (not St.) James, Nastassja Kinski, Mary Steenburgen, Calista Flockhart,

Steven Spielberg, Matthew McConaughey, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Conan O'Brien, Macaulay Culkin, Shaun Cassidy, Sam Shepard, Burt Reynolds, Tom and Ray Magliozzi, David Duchovny, Jackson Browne, Bruce Springsteen, Andrae Crouch, Jeff Goldblum, Ozzy Osbourne,

Orson Welles, Eugene O'Neill, John Hersey, Buddy Holly, Aaron Copland, Hoagy Carmichael, Michael Murphey (the singer), Michael Murphy (the actor), Prince Philip, Bob Geldof, Glen Campbell, Gianni Versace, Mark or Marc Antony, Julius Caesar, Cesar Chavez,

Norman Schwarzkopf, John Shalikashvili, Vaclav Havel, Mikhail Gorbachev, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Andrei Codrescu, Daniel Yankelovich, Ted Kaczynski, Alan Greenspan, Kofi Annan, Yasser (also Yasir) Arafat, Ehud Barak, Benjamin Netanyahu, Slobodan Milosevic, Al Qaeda or Al-Qaida, Osama bin Laden,

Emeril Lagasse, Itzhak Perlman, Luciano Pavarotti, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Hakeem Olajuwon, Shaquille O'Neal, Pat Summerall, Keith Olbermann, Bob Uecker, Deion Sanders, Vijay Singh,

U2, Hanson, Black Crowes, Nelson (not The Nelsons), Eurythmics (not The Eurythmics), Edie Brickell, Wilson Phillips, INXS, Axl Rose,

The Smithsonian Institution, Vassar College, Kenyon College, The Citadel, Johns Hopkins, Texas Woman's University, McMurry College in Abilene, Berkeley, Columbia, the school and the cities; Colombia, the country, Nielsen ratings, Procter & Gamble, Wedgwood, the Macintosh computer, Arthur Andersen & Co., McDonald's, 7-Eleven, Macy's, Lord & Taylor, Neiman Marcus, Marshall Field's, J.C. Penney, Harpers Ferry, Paterson, N.J., Parris Island, Pittsburg and Pittsburgh, Three Mile Island, Shangri-la, The Fontainebleau Hilton in Miami, The Maastricht Treaty, Charlie Daniels, Jack Daniel's, Popsicle, Realtor, Frisbee, Valium, Prozac, Laundromat., Ping-Pong (the trademark), but pingpong, Formica, Dr Pepper, *The Star-Spangled Banner*, *Bullitt*, In Houston: Schlumberger, Bissonnet, Battelstein's, Hermann Hospital and Park, Wesleyan, Holcombe, In Dallas: NorthPark, Thanks-Giving Square, Snider Plaza, 7-Eleven, Deep Ellum, Farmer's Market, Woodall Rodgers Freeway, Webb Chapel Road, Belt Line Road, Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport, Farmers Branch, DeSoto, Mesquite, In Texas: Big Spring, Waxahachie, China Spring, Mexia, Bexar. Theater/Theatre and Center/Centre, Theatre and centre are the English spelling; nevertheless, with proper nouns, follow the preferred spelling. But, in referring to a theater or a center (that is, not proper nouns), spell the word -er.

A Footnote on Style and Spelling

Decisions made on style take into consideration logic and reason, but sometimes tradition plays a part in deciding how a certain matter will be handled. Differences of opinion do arise, and professionals often disagree on certain aspects of style. Here are some of those differences:

1. Abbreviations of months, streets and states:

This style involves abbreviating most states after cities, and sanctions few abbreviations beyond that. Many publications abbreviate months when used with specific dates (September 15) and streets when used with specific addresses (3226 Daniel Avenue). This style does not.

2. Capitalizing titles when standing alone:

Often executives insist that their titles be capitalized when standing alone. This style does not capitalize those titles.

3. The semicolon:

- a. Some people use a comma and not a semicolon before and in a series. Example:

The new members are George Miller, associate professor of psychology; Helen Lacey, assistant professor of English, and Maurice Walker, chairman of the Department of Economics. We use a semicolon after English.

- b. Some authorities use semicolons in constructions such as
The places are Worcester, Mass.; Baltimore, Md.; and Spindale, N.C.
The dates are April 19, 1910; August 9, 1941; and May 20, 1978.
This style does not. Use a comma instead of a semicolon.

4. Possession:

Many people add 's when a word ending in s is possessive: Jones's. We do not. We merely add the apostrophe: Jones'.

5. Courtesy titles:

In this style we use only a person's last name on second reference.

We don't refer to the person as Mr., Mrs., Miss or Ms. Some publications use Mr., Mrs., etc. — known as courtesy titles — on second reference. We don't.

We would tend to use Dr. when referring to a medical doctor, but we do not use Dr. as an academic title. In referring to teachers, you may use their rank when appropriate. But use the rank after the name as in: T. Whitcomb Smithson, assistant professor.

6. Hyphenation

While the style enunciated here calls for well to be hyphenated in all instances when combined with another word, some authorities make this distinction on well:

Use the hyphen to join two or more words serving as a single adjective before a noun: a well-known surgeon. —Harbrace College Handbook

But omit the hyphen when the expression follows the noun (the authority was well known). — *An American Rhetoric*, Holt, Rinehart Winston

The purpose of this listing is to show you that qualified professionals may differ on basic aspects of style. This is by no means a complete list of differences. You should be prepared for others when you encounter them. —David McHam