

## X EDITORIAL STYLE GUIDE

X follows the editorial guidelines outlined in the Associated Press Stylebook (AP Style) to ensure all written materials are standardized and consistent. This style guide draws from AP Style, with additions and modifications that have evolved to address X organizations' specific needs.

When writing, aim for a sixth-to-eighth grade reading level. Write so that a 12-year old would understand. Strive for communications that are clear, concise, consistent and compelling. Always answer **why** your topic matters and articulate the **ask or action** for the reader.

- **after-effect**: hyphenate
- **aka**: no periods, lowercase. Use to introduce pseudonyms, aliases, nicknames, working names, legalized names and pen names
- **alignment**: left-align all text and images on X websites and documents. Do not center.
- **a.m., p.m.**: lowercase, separate with periods, separate from figure with space. ex: **3 a.m.**
  - When listing times for events, do not repeat a.m./p.m. if event begins *and* ends in the morning/afternoon. ex: 3 a.m., 8-10 a.m., 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. *Incorrect: 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.*
  - use 12-hour time, not military time. ex: 2 p.m. not 1400
- **APRN**: use on second reference to advanced practice registered nurses. Do not use APN or "mid-level"
- **Alumnus, alumni, alumna, alumnae**: Use this table for correct references

Woman	Women	Man	Men	Women and Men
alumna	alumnae	alumnus	alumni	alumni

- **assure**: use to describe comfort. Do not confuse with ensure or insure
- **Band-Aid**: because Band-Aid is trademarked, use "adhesive bandage" unless referring to a Band-Aid bandage. This is true for other common branded products like Kleenex, Vaseline, etc.
- **bedridden**: one word, no hyphen
- **between**: use only in spatial terms. ex: "I sat between two men on the airplane." Use among to denote groupings. ex: "Her performance was the best among all of the competitors."
- **bloodborne, bloodstream**: one word
- **board-certified physician**: hyphenate and lowercase, unless part of formal title/name
- **breast-feed, breast-feeding, breast-fed**: hyphenate
- **cesarean section**: C-section with lower case C on second reference
- **cardiac arrest**: died "from" cardiac arrest, not died "of" cardiac arrest
- **care board(s)**: two words
- **caregiver**: one word

- **comma:** In a list, do not use a comma between the second-to-last and last item, known as a serial comma or Oxford comma. AP's stance is to omit the serial comma except when it prevents misreading.  
ex: "Strive for communications that are clear, concise and compelling."  
ex: "I like to pet kittens, puppies and bunnies."
- **comorbidity:** one word, no hyphen
- **co-worker:** hyphenated
- **child care, day care:** two words, no hyphen. Prefer "child care" over "day care."
- **credentials:** Do not use periods after MD, PhD or any other credential. Separate multiple degrees with commas. ex: "Pooh Bear, MD, MBA, trained as a pediatrician."
- **dates:** Friday, Oct. 18, 2019
  - capitalize and spell out days of the week
  - abbreviate months with first three letters - except for March, April, May, June and July.  
ex: Jan. 2 and June 18
  - when a phrase refers to month and year, spell out the month but do not separate the year with a comma. ex: January 2019
  - when a phrase refers to a month and day - or a month, day and year - abbreviate the month and set off the year with commas. ex: Jan. 1 or Jan. 1, 2019 and March 1 or March 1, 2019.
  - when a phrase refers to a month only, spell out the month. ex: "Thanksgiving is always in November."
  - when a phrase refers to a weekday, month and day (and/or year), spell out the weekday, abbreviate the month and separate with commas. ex: Friday, Jan. 1 or Friday, June 18, 2019
  - do not use ordinals (superscript 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>) with Arabic figures. ex: "January first is a holiday."  
*Incorrect: "The 4<sup>th</sup> of July is a holiday."*
  - when describing an event that occurs during the current year, it is unnecessary to include the year.
- **deal breaker:** two words
- **decision-maker, decision-making:** two words, hyphenated
- **department names:** capitalize formal names. ex: Medical-Surgical or Med-Surg
- **e-commerce:** use a hyphen with all e-terms, including e-commerce, e-book, e-business. Email is the exception.
- **email:** lowercase, no hyphen
- **Emergency Department:** ER and ED can be used interchangeably. "ER" is better understood by the public.
- **ensure:** to be sure about something. Do not confuse with assure or insure
- **et al.:** no period after "et." Use as the last item in a list, where it doesn't take a comma.

- **firsthand**: one word
- **fiscal year**: lowercase, spell out on first reference. Abbreviate to FY on second reference. Ex: FY20
  - If referencing two years, truncate second year. ex: "fiscal year 2016-17" or "FY2016-17"
- **font**: X fonts under discussion. For now, use Verdana or Century Gothic.
- **fundraiser**: one word
- **groundbreaking, groundblessing**: one word
- **hand washing**: two words, no hyphen
- **healthcare**: one word in most instances
- **HealthGrades's**: per HealthGrades, the possessive requires an apostrophe +s, unless the following word begins with "s." ex: "HealthGrades's designation" and "HealthGrades' study"
- **High-Reliability Organization (HRO)**:
  - when used as a formal reference, spell out and capitalize on first reference
  - lowercase informal references
  - hyphenate when used as a modifier. ex: high-reliability organization, high-reliability practice
- **home page**: two words, lowercase
- **in order to**: "in order" is usually redundant and can be removed.
  - ex: "She stood in order to see over the crowd" versus "She stood to see over the crowd."
- **inservice, in service**: one word when referring to a learning opportunity. Two words when referring to something in working order. ex: "The wifi was in service when the nursing inservice began."
- **insure**: refers to insurance only. ex: "You should insure your home and automobile." Do not confuse with ensure (to be sure about something) or assure (to provide comfort)
- **Intensive Care Unit**: capitalize first reference and abbreviate second. ex: Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (first reference) and PICU (subsequent references)
- **internet**: capitalized, formal name
- **intranet**: internal internet for X organization, behind a firewall and not accessible to the public. lowercase. ex: "X's intranet is called Xville."
- **Júan Martínez, president, X Healthcare Family**: always include accent over ú.
  - *TIP*: Hold down the Alt button and type 163 to create an accented ú.
  - *TIP*: In Word, click "insert" and then "symbol" to open options and find the ú.
- **Labor & Delivery, L&D**: use ampersand (&) as separator
- **Level [I, II, III, IV] Trauma Center**: capitalize and spell out on first reference.
  - use Level I status or Level I designation on second reference.
  - Level I is highest designation

- **login:** one word when used as noun. ex: "Access the portal with your network login."
- **log in, log on:** two words when used as a verb. ex: "You must first log on to the network."
- **longtime, long time:**
  - one word when used as a modifier. ex: "They are longtime friends."
  - Otherwise, two words. ex: "They have known each other for a long time."
- **Magnet™:** use trademark symbol on first reference; designation awarded by ANCC
- **MD:** capitalized, no periods between letters
  - set off with commas on each side. ex: "Matthew Stahlman, MD, specializes in cardiology."
  - do not use Dr. *and* MD in the same reference. ex: "Dr. Oz specializes in neurology."
  - use "Drs." to refer to more than one physician. ex: "Drs. Jones and Isis presented on wound care."
- **microorganisms:** one word
- **million, billion:**
  - use number figures with million/billion in all except the most casual statements. ex: "At least 12 million dollars" versus "I'd like to make a billion dollars."
  - use "\$" before a number figure when referencing dollar amounts. ex: "\$1 million." *Incorrect:* "1 million dollars" or "\$1 million dollars."
- **Mother-Baby:** hyphenate
- **multidisciplinary:** one word, no hyphen
- **needleless, needlestick:** one word
- **non-solicitation:** hyphenate. ex: "This message was sent in accordance with X's non-solicitation policy."
- **numerals, numbers:**
  - spell out numbers one through nine
  - use figures for numbers 10 and higher
  - if age is used as an adjective, use a hyphen. ex: "The 4-year-old girl is here."
  - Spell out ordinals for first through ninth when indicating sequence in time or location. ex: "The second annual Unmasked Gala."
  - Use figures for 10<sup>th</sup> and above. ex: "Convening the 197<sup>th</sup> Nursing Congress"
- **on-site, in-house:** hyphenated
- **open-heart surgery:** the "open-heart" is hyphenated
- **outpatient, inpatient:** one word

- **over:**
  - use as a spatial reference. ex: "The cow jumped over the moon."
  - use "more than" for amounts. ex: "They raised more than \$2 million in donations."
- **Pathway to Excellence®:** use ® on first reference. Designation awarded by ANCC; previously known as Nurse-Friendly, awarded by TNA
- **payer:** always spelled with an "e." Payor with an "o" is not a word.
- **percent:** spell out unless in a table. ex: "About 45 percent completed the survey."
- **period spacing:** add only ONE space between a period and the beginning of the next sentence
- **phone numbers:** use dashes, not parentheses or periods. ex: 512-867-5309
- **pre-op, pre-operative:** hyphenate
- **reflection:** lowercase
- **registered nurse:** lowercase, unless used with formal title listed before name.
- **RN:**
  - list highest degree first. List RN first in credentials before certifications. ex: John Deere, PhD, MSN, RN
  - Listing certifications is optional. If included, list by most recent and relevant to nursing
  - Per the American Nurses Credential Center, APRN is *not* a legal, credentialed or scholarly designation, even in email signatures. ex: Jane Doe, MSN, RN, FNP-C. *Incorrect: Jane Doe, RN, APRN.*
- **Rx:** lowercase "x"
- **states:** abbreviate states written in text, except for these eight states, which should always be spelled out: Idaho, Iowa, Alaska, Hawaii, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah.
- **technologist:** not technician (there may be some exceptions to this rule, so be sure to verify usage with client)
- **time:** 3 a.m.
  - Use numerals and lowercased "a.m." and "p.m." with periods
  - Separate from figure with space
  - When listing times for events, do not repeat a.m./p.m. if event begins *and* ends in the morning/afternoon. EX: 3 a.m., 8-10 a.m. and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. *Incorrect: 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.*
  - use 12-hour time, not military time. EX: 2 p.m. not 1400
- **titles:**
  - capitalize titles when used directly *before* an individual's name. EX: "President and CEO Alfred Hitchcock, FACHE, spoke at the ceremony."
  - Do not insert a comma between the title and name.
  - lowercase titles when *following* a name; insert commas before and after the title. EX: "Dr. Marc Later, president and CEO, X Hospital, spoke at the ceremony."

- lowercase titles when used informally to describe a person's position. EX: "During his tenure as president and CEO, Juan Martinez has seen incredible growth."
- **that/which:** *Who* and sometimes *that* refer to people. *That* and *which* refer to groups or things.
  - ex: "Adrienne is on the team **that** won first place. She belongs to a great organization, **which** specializes in saving dolphins."
  - use "that" for restrictive clauses that are essential to the meaning of the sentence. ex: "I do not trust products **that** claim "all natural ingredients" because the phrase can mean almost anything."
  - use "which" for non-restrictive clauses that can be removed without changing the meaning of the sentence. ex: "The product claiming "all natural ingredients," **which** appeared in the Sunday paper, is on sale."
- **toward, upward, forward, backward, in regard to:**
  - these words are singular. Do not add an "s" at the end. ex: "He flew toward the sun."
  - *Incorrect usage:* "I'd like to speak to the doctor in regardsto my results."
- **United States:**
  - Use "U.S." with periods as a noun or adjective
  - in headlines, use "US" - no periods
  - lowercase "states" when used as a casual reference to United States. EX: "He sailed back to the states last night."
- **USA:** no periods
- **web, website:** one word, lowercase
  - "Web" can be used interchangeably with "Internet."
  - If a website is hyperlinked, underline it to indicate a link. ex: [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)
- **which:** see "that/which"
- **who/whom:**
  - Swap out he/whom to decide whether who or whom is correct: he = who; him = whom.
  - ex: Who/Whom wrote the letter? "He wrote the letter." ('Him wrote the letter' doesn't make sense).
  - TIP: Remember that him and whom both end in "m."
- **years: 2013-14:** truncate second year. Do not type 2015-2016. See *dates*
- **X-ray:** hyphenate and capitalize the "X"