

OFFICE OF MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Writing Conventions

This style guide was developed to assist those who write on behalf of the University. It includes some commonly used AP style rules as well as style guidelines specific to Southwestern University. Other style guidelines may be more appropriate for special types of publications and audiences.

Please also refer to the University's brand guidelines for more information on our voice, tone, and writing tactics at southwestern.edu/brandguidelines.

For questions about style guidelines, contact the Office of Marketing and Communications at sucommunications@southwestern.edu.

Α

academic degrees

Several variations are acceptable, but we should lean toward the simplest in most cases: bachelor's degree, master's degree, and doctorate. The apostrophe goes in the same place for the plural: master's degrees, not masters' degrees. When using the formal degree name, lowercase the degree and the major unless the major is a proper noun: bachelor of science in biology and master of fine arts in theatre but bachelor of arts in French.

Avoid using *baccalaureate* as a substitute for *bachelor's degree*, but if you must, do not couple it with the word *degree* because *baccalaureate* means "bachelor's degree." Similarly, it's *doctorate* or *doctoral degree* but never *doctorate degree*.

Note that AP discourages using degree abbreviations. Do not list more than two degrees for an individual named in a press release.

bachelor of arts (B.A.)
bachelor of divinity (B.D.)
bachelor of laws (LL.B)
bachelor of science (B.S.)
bachelor of science in education (B.S.Ed.)
doctor of education (Ed.D.)
doctor of law (J.D.)
doctor of laws (L.L.D.)
doctor of medicine (M.D.)
doctor of pharmacy (Pharm.D.)
doctor of philosophy (Ph.D.)
doctor of public health (Dr.P.H.)
master of arts (M.A.)

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master of business administration (M.B.A.) master of public health (M.P.H.) master of public policy (M.P.P.) master of science (M.S.)

Southwestern offers five degrees: B.A., bachelor of arts; B.F.A., bachelor of fine arts; B.M., bachelor of music; B.S., bachelor of science; B.S.Ed., bachelor of science in education.

academic departments

Use title case for the department name. The name of the field or subject should be listed before the word department: the Theatre Department, not the Department of Theatre.

academic honors

Distinctions such as *cum laude*, *magna cum laude*, and *summa cum laude* should be lowercase and in italics. When used with the verb *to graduate*, do not set the expression off with commas: *She graduated* summa cum laude *from Southwestern*. When accompanying a degree, do set it off with commas: *He earned a bachelor of arts in Spanish*, cum laude, *in 1995*.

addresses

Be consistent in spelling out *avenue*, *boulevard*, and *street* or abbreviating to *Ave.*, *Blvd.*, or *St.* in any single document.

admission

The Office of Admission (singular, not Admissions) when referring to Southwestern's recruitment office.

advisor

Not adviser.

ages

In most publications, for ages one through nine, spell out. For ages 10 and older, use figures. For ages expressed as adjectives before a noun or as substitutes for a noun, use hyphens.

Examples: A five-year-old child. The law is eight years old. The race is for 13-year-old students. The woman is in her 30s (no apostrophe).

In press releases, use figures for age in years: *The student, 19, has a sister, 6.* If the age is in months, include the word *months*: *The child, 2 months.*



alma mater

Lowercase, no italics.

alumni

Alumni is used for plural graduates regardless of gender (not alums or alumnis).

Alum is used for a single nongender-specific or nonbinary graduate.

Alumnus is used for a single male graduate.

Alumna is used for a single female graduate.

Alumnae is used for plural female graduates.

An *alum* is identified as a former student who has completed 24 credits and is not currently enrolled at Southwestern University.

There are several different scenarios in which alumni may be listed. Here are guidelines for those scenarios:

Couples in which both are alumni: The earlier graduate's full name is listed first, followed by the spouse's full name. Include surnames used while at Southwestern where applicable. The class year is listed after the full name of each spouse: Hermione Granger '99 and Ron Weasley '99; Fitzwilliam Darcy '05 and Elizabeth Bennet Darcy '07.

Couples in which only one partner is an alum: List the alum's full name first, including surnames used while at Southwestern if applicable and the class year, followed by the spouse's full name: Rachel Green '05 and Ross Geller; Edward Rochester '15 and Jane Eyre Rochester.

a.m., p.m.

Lowercase, with periods. Avoid redundancy: 8:00 a.m. this morning.

В

board of trustees, board of visitors

References to Southwestern's Board of Trustees and Board of Visitors are in uppercase. However, as per AP style, the phrases *board of trustees*, *board of directors*, etc. are not otherwise capitalized.

buildings

See the appendix for a list of formal and informal building names. When using *the* before the building name, use lowercase: *the Alma Thomas Fine Arts Center*, *the Rufus Franklin Edwards Studio Arts Building*.



bulleted lists

When listing items in bulleted form, capitalize the first word of each item. If each item in the list is a complete sentence, end each item with a period; if each item is a fragment, omit the periods. Use parallel structure for all items (i.e., do not mix fragments with sentences, and do not begin some items with verbs and others with nouns). If introducing the list with a complete sentence, use a colon; if the introduction is not a complete sentence, omit the colon:

The agenda for the Board of Trustees includes

- Approval of the 2017-18 budget
- Discussion of a proposed nepotism policy
- An executive session to consider the president's contract

Alumni have gone on to pursue careers in the following fields:

- Foreign-language teaching
- Lexicography
- Speech therapy

С

Center for Career & Professional Development, CCPD

When referring to the physical office, use the full name on first reference and "the Center" thereafter; when referring to the staff, spell out *Center for Career & Professional Development (CCPD)* on first reference (with the acronym in parentheses), and then use *CCPD* thereafter.

chair

Use chair, not chairman or chairwoman.

class notes

Follow the guidelines under *alumni* above. Boldface alumni names and class years only. The couple's current city and state of residence should immediately follow the couple's name, framed by commas, followed by the date of the marriage or birth (if provided). Couples and parents should be listed under the class year of the earlier graduate or alphabetically if the spouses graduated in the same year.

1997

MARRIAGE: Ben Wyatt to Leslie Knope, Pawnee, IN, in July 2019.

2005

BIRTH: Eric Taylor and Tami Hayes Taylor '07, Dillon, TX, welcomed a daughter, Julie, on April 3, 2019.

2008

MARRIAGE: Anne Elliott to Frederick Wentworth '09, Bath, U.K., on August 15, 2019.



2015

BIRTH: Daisy Fay Buchanan and **Tom Buchanan**, New York City, NY, welcomed Pammy on February 17, 2019.

course names

These should be capitalized when referring to a specifically named class: *Research Methods I*. Lowercase is appropriate for generic references: *John Smith's colonial history class*.

course numbers

Use Arabic numerals, and capitalize the subject when used with a numeral: Philosophy 209.

D

dates

Use Arabic figures without ordinal suffixes (i.e., st, nd, rd, or th). For example: Their anniversary is March 20, not Their anniversary is March 20th. When a phrase lists only a month and a year, do not separate the year with commas. However, when a phrase refers to a month, day, and year, set off the year with commas: January 1972 was a cold month. January 2 was the coldest day of the month. He was born March 3, 1944, in Michigan.

dean's list

Lowercase in all uses: He is on the dean's list. She is a dean's-list student.

directions and regions

In general, lowercase north, south, east, west, northeast, northern, etc., when they indicate compass direction. However, capitalize when they designate regions: He drove north toward home. He lives in the North. A storm system that developed in the Midwest is spreading eastward. It will bring showers to the East Coast by morning and to the entire Northeast by late in the day. Capitalize when used to denote widely known sections: West Texas, Northern and Southern California, South Florida, the South Side of Chicago, the Lower East Side of New York, Far North Dallas, Northern New Mexico. If in doubt, lowercase.

With names of nations, lowercase unless they are part of a proper name or are used to designate a politically divided nation: northern France, eastern Canada, the western United States, but Northern Ireland, South Korea, South Africa.



Ε

Education for Tomorrow

The tagline should be in title case but not italicized.

emeritus/emerita

This word often is added to formal titles to denote that individuals who have retired retain their rank or title. When used, place *emeritus* (no italics) after the formal title, in keeping with the general practice of academic institutions: *Virgil Carwell, professor emeritus; Professor Emerita Martha Allen*.

events

In running text, capitalize when referring to a specific year, but lowercase in generic references: commencement vs. Commencement 2018; some students leave campus during fall break vs. Fall Break 2018.

F

faculty

A collective noun that takes a singular or plural verb. When referring to a body working together as a group or single entity, use *faculty* with a singular verb: *The faculty has proposed changes to the curriculum*. When referring to faculty members acting individually, use *faculty* or *faculty members* with a plural verb: *The faculty are debating how to best combat plagiarism*. The faculty members have agreed on a decision.

freshman vs. first-year student

Use *first-year student* in all references to a student in their first year of studies.

G

Greek(s)

Capitalize when used in reference to a Greek-letter fraternity or sorority.

Н

headings



Use sentence case and bold without periods for headings within copy:

Yes, Virginia, writing is hard

Bacon ipsum dolor amet venison frankfurter drumstick pastrami, kevin corned beef pork belly meatloaf brisket shank landjaeger. Frankfurter porchetta tail bacon capicola strip steak cow alcatra prosciutto fatback jerky picanha meatball pork.

M

majors

The major is lowercase unless it's a proper noun. She is majoring in political science. He is a French major.

media

In the sense of mass communication, such as magazines, newspapers, the news services, radio, and television, the word is plural: *The news media are often the target of criticism*.

Mosaic (the Student Life program)

Only capitalize the *M* in *Mosaic*. It is never *MOSAIC*.

Ν

numbers

In general, spell out numbers one through nine, and use numerals for 10 and above. Some exceptions are sports scores, ratios, percentages, monetary amounts, and temperature readings, in which figures should be used for all except zero: *They won the game 4-2, a 12:1 student-to-faculty ratio, 7%, \$4.00* (not *four dollars*), 4°C.

- Sentence Start: Spell out a numeral at the beginning of a sentence. If necessary, rewrite the sentence to avoid this. The only exception to this rule is when a sentence is started with a number that identifies a calendar year:
 - Incorrect: 344 first-year students entered Southwestern last year. Correct: Last year, 344 first-year students entered Southwestern. Correct: 1989 was a very good year.
 - When large numbers must be spelled out, use a hyphen to connect a word ending in y to another word (e.g., forty-one).
- Casual Uses: Spell out casual expressions: For the thousandth time, please clean the house. Thanks a million. She jogged a quarter of a mile.
- **Proper Names:** Use words or numerals according to an organization's practice: 20th Century Fox, Twentieth Century Fund, 1st Ward, 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.



- Ranges: In general, use an en dash without spaces rather than a hyphen to designate ranges, and use figures instead of words or a mix of words and numerals: 8–10 students, not 8-10 students. Note that when using the prepositions from . . . to and between to designate a range, spell out the words instead of using the en dash: from 0 to 100 miles per hour, between five and eight cupcakes.
- Plural Numbers: Add an -s with no apostrophe to form plurals: She threw 6s; She remembers her 60s.
- **Centuries:** The 10-and-above rule applies: Spell out centuries below 10; use numerals for 10 and above. Lowercase *century: the 20th century, the fourth century,* etc.
- Money: The dollar sign or other symbol should precede any monetary value, even ranges or series of dollar amounts. Either use two decimal points for monetary values (e.g., \$5.00, £20.00-£25.00), or exclude the decimal point places (e.g., \$10,000-\$19,999), but don't use both in any single document; be consistent for all amounts listed.
- Commas: Include commas in all four-digit numbers, except when listing years, SAT scores, tax forms, rules and regulations, and product model numbers: 1,458; 4,404; 9,999 vs. He scored 1100 on the SAT in 1993, Form 1040A, Amendment 2401C, Ferrari 8000XT.

0

obituaries

Alphabetize by the alum's last name. Include any surnames used while at Southwestern where applicable. The alum's full name is followed directly by their class year with no intervening comma; the alum's city and state of residence follows: *Quincey Morris '58, London, U.K.* Faculty, staff, donors, and friends of the University are listed after alumni, in alphabetical order by surname.

Р

Paideia®

A registered trademark symbol needs to be used only on first reference (including in headlines) when referring to this unique program at Southwestern.

parents

Parents should be identified with a *P* and by their student's class year just as alumni are (see **alumni** entry), separating years with commas: *Jane Doe P'18; Patrick Smith P'20, P'23*. If the parent is also an alum, list their graduation year first: *Donna Jones '90, P'19*.



punctuation

Here are some common examples:

- Apostrophe: See the comprehensive entry within the punctuation section in the *AP Stylebook*. One of the most common mistakes is the placement of an apostrophe where it is not needed. Apostrophes are only used to show possession or to indicate that numbers or letters are missing. Incorrect: 1960's. Correct: 1960s, '60s.
- En dash: Use an en dash and not a hyphen to designate a range of numbers: 1980-1981.
- Em dash: Use an em dash rather than a double hyphen for emphasized appositives and other nonrestrictive phrases as well as parentheticals.
- Oxford comma: Southwestern uses the Oxford (aka serial) comma: students, faculty, and staff.
- Hyphen: Use hyphens in compound modifiers that occur before the noun they modify: small-animal hospital, French-speaking people, elementary-school teacher. Do not use a hyphen in a compound modifier if it consists of an adverb ending in "ly" followed by an adjective, if the compound modifier includes a monetary value, or if the compound modifier occurs after the noun it modifies: steadily growing enrollment, \$14 million building, she is well regarded. (N.B. There are some compounds that are always hyphenated regardless of position, so if in doubt, refer to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary.) Omit hyphens in words including prefixes or suffixes unless the prefix precedes a capitalized word: coordinate, coauthor, antifungal but sub-Arctic. However, use hyphens to disambiguate (e.g., a hyphen is required in to re-press a shirt to distinguish it from to repress a memory).

punctuating quotations

Here are some notable rules:

- Brackets are used to insert a word or phrase into a quotation for clarification: "They [the doctors] could help."
- Single quotation marks are used to enclose a quotation within a quotation.
- **Block quotations** should be used when a quote is three lines or longer. The quote is then indented; no quotation marks are used. The period belongs before the parenthetical citation.
- **Periods and commas** should always go within punctuation marks unless there is a parenthetical citation. In such a case, place the punctuation after the citation.
- Colons and semicolons always go after the closing quotation mark.
- Ellipses can be used for omissions in the middle of a sentence. At the end of a sentence, an ellipsis is followed by an additional period. If a parenthetical citation follows an omission at the end of a sentence, place the period after the final parenthesis. In cases of omitting a long passage, use a single line of spaced dots as long as the preceding line.
- Slash marks are used to separate different lines of poetry: John Donne wrote, "send not to know / for whom the bell tolls."
- When the whole sentence except for the section enclosed in quotation marks is a question or exclamation, the **question or exclamation mark** goes after the closing quotation mark: Which writer wrote, "Ask not for whom the bell tolls"?
- Parenthetical citations are followed by a period even if the quote is a question. Kurt Koffka, a Gestalt psychologist, asked, "Why do humans see their minds in terms of elementary parts?" (Gray 74).

SOUTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

R

RA

Abbreviation for resident assistant. No periods when abbreviated.

residence hall

Use this term instead of *dorm* or *dormitory*.

S

schools at Southwestern University

Southwestern consists of three schools: The Brown College of Arts and Sciences, The Sarofim School of Fine Arts, and The Garey School of Natural Sciences.

semesters

Use lowercase for fall, spring, or summer unless it is part of an official event name: in the fall of 2018, during spring semester, but Fall 2018 Commencement.

spaces between sentences

Use only one space after periods, colons, exclamation points, question marks, and quotation marks.

Southwestern Experience

This phrase should be in title case and italics.

state and territory abbreviations

Use the postal abbreviation when abbreviations are called for. In standard copy, spell out state names.

Alabama: AL Georgia: GA Alaska: AK Guam: GU American Samoa: AS Hawaii: HI Arizona: A7 Idaho: ID Arkansas: AR Illinois: IL California: CA Indiana: IN Colorado: CO Iowa: IA Connecticut: CT Kansas: KS Delaware: DE Kentucky: KY District of Columbia: DC Louisiana: LA Florida: FL Maine: ME

Marshall Islands: MH
Massachusetts: MA
Michigan: MI
Micronesia: FM
Minnesota: MN
Mississippi: MS
Missouri: MO
Montana: MT
Nebraska: NE

Nevada: NV

Maryland: MD



New Hampshire: NH
New Jersey: NJ
New Mexico: NM
New York: NY
North Carolina: NC
North Dakota: ND
Northern Marianas: MP

Northern Marianas: MF Ohio: OH

Oklahoma: OK

Oregon: OR Utah: UT Palau: PW Vermont: VT Pennsylvania: PA Virginia: VA Puerto Rico: PR Virgin Islands: VI Rhode Island: RI Washington: WA South Carolina: SC West Virginia: WV South Dakota: SD Wisconsin: WI Tennessee: TN Wyoming: WY

Texas: TX

A comma should separate city and state *and* the state from the rest of the sentence except when the state is mentioned at the end of a sentence: *She lives in Honolulu, Hawaii, for three months each year.*

students

Current students should be identified by their class year just as alumni are (see alumni entry).

subject

Lowercase subject names unless they are proper nouns (e.g., a language) or are part of a specific course name with number: *English*, *French*, *biology*, *political science*, *Algebra I*.

Т

telephone numbers

Do not use parentheses, omit the 1 for the national code, and use periods instead of hyphens: 512.863.6100. If extension numbers are given, use a comma to separate the main number from the extension: 800.555.1234, ext. 567.

theater vs. theatre

Use theater when making a generic reference: I am going to the theater or he is studying theater. Also use theater to refer to buildings (the Jesse and Mary Gibbs Jones Theater, the Alma Thomas Theater).

Use theatre to refer to the SU academic department (the Theatre Department).

times

Use figures with all times, including the hour and minute separated by a colon: 8:30 a.m., 4:00 p.m. The abbreviations a.m. and p.m. (lowercase, with the periods) should accompany any time given, even in ranges of times that occur solely in the morning hours or solely in the evening hours: 10:00 p.m.-11:00 p.m.; the buses will arrive at 2:15 p.m., 3:00 p.m., and 3:45 p.m. Avoid redundancies such as 4:00 a.m. in the morning or 12:00 p.m. noon.

SOUTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

titles

· Composition titles

Apply the guidelines listed here to titles of books, movies, operas, plays, poems, songs, and television programs, as well as lectures, speeches, and works of art.

Always capitalize the first word and last word in a title in addition to nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Do not capitalize prepositions, conjunctions, articles, or the particle *to* used in an infinitive.

Titles of books (including reference books), periodicals (e.g., magazines, newspapers, and journals), television programs, movies, and works of art are italicized, except for the Bible, which is in roman typeface. Anything considered a "freestanding publication," such as pamphlets, brochures, reports, and white papers, is treated as a book, with the title in italics: *Journal of Air Law and Commerce, This Is Us, The Fast and the Furious*. Omit *magazine* unless it is part of the publication's formal title: *The New York Times Magazine*, *Newsweek, Time*. Check the masthead if in doubt.

Use quotation marks and roman typeface for short works that cannot be divided into named sections, such as articles, television episodes, songs, and short poems: "Material Girl," "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud."

Conference and symposium titles

Use title case only: The 29th Annual Quokka Symposium, Cybersecurity in the 21st Century.

Courtesy titles

In general, do not use the courtesy titles *Miss*, *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, *Ms.*, *Dr.*, or *Dr. Rev.* before a person's name: *Joe Jones*, *Emily Smith*. Use official job titles, unabbreviated, instead. Exceptions to this might include development publications, such as the annual report.

Job titles

Capitalize formal titles only when they precede a person's name: Dean of the Faculty Jane Doe, Professor and Chair of Bakery Science James Johnson, Senator Henrietta Chapman, First Sergeant Andrea Blake.

Do not capitalize titles elsewhere: Jane Doe, dean of the faculty; James Johnson, who is a professor and the chair of the Bakery Science Department; Henrietta Chapman is a senator representing Nevada; Andrea Blake is a first sergeant in the U.S. Marine Corps.

On subsequent references, omit the title, using the person's surname only: *Doe, Johnson, Chapman, Blake*.

SOUTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

Be specific when using titles that refer to faculty rank: Assistant Professor Sonny Crockett, Associate Professor Ricardo Tubbs. Use Professor only for full professors, not as a generic term for faculty members. Refer to the current online University catalog for correct faculty titles. Similarly, for government representatives, add U.S. or state as necessary to avoid confusion: U.S. Representative Miriam Rose, Harvey Stewart is a Connecticut state representative.

Do not capitalize descriptive terms (as opposed to official job titles) that precede names: *astronomer Angel Diaz*.

Exceptions can be made for direct quotations (e.g., if a student refers to a professor as *Dr. Bean*), worship programs, formal invitations, and certain other publications.

Lecture titles

Use quotation marks (no italics) and title case: Associate Professor Mike Snyder will present "A Study of Iron Age Inhabitants of the Northeast Texas Area."

U

university

When referring to an institution in general, use lowercase: There are many fine universities in the state of Texas.

When referring to Southwestern University, however, use the following forms: *Southwestern University* (first reference), *SU*, *Southwestern*, the *University*, or *Southwestern University* (subsequent references). In news releases, use *Southwestern University* on first reference, *Southwestern* on succeeding references.

Do not capitalize *university* if used in a title that is otherwise lowercase: *Cindy Locke, associate vice president* for *university relations*.

URLs

When citing a website, do not include http://. Otherwise, type the accurate URL. Do not include a backslash at the end of a URL unless the link won't work without it. Use a period at the end if the URL is at the end of a sentence.

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vice

Use two words, with no hyphen: vice president, vice chair, vice regent, vice chancellor.



W-X-Y-Z

webpage

One word, not capitalized.

website

One word, not capitalized: For more information, visit our website at www.southwestern.edu.

years

Use figures: 1991, 2005, etc. When referring to decades or centuries, use an s without an apostrophe: the 1890s, the 1920s, the 1960s, not the 1980's.

Years are the lone exception to the general rule that numbers should not be used to start a sentence: 1989 was an extraordinary year. But try to avoid this construction: The year 1989 was extraordinary.



APPENDIX

Campus Facilities: Formal and Informal Names

Formal Name	Informal Name
A. Frank Smith, Jr. Library Center	
Alma Thomas Theater	ATT
Brown-Cody Hall	Brown-Cody
Charles and Elizabeth Prothro Bishops Memorial Lounge	Bishops Lounge
Charles and Elizabeth Prothro Center for Lifelong Learning	
Charline Hamlin McCombs Residential Center	
Corbin J. Robertson Center	
Ernest L. Kurth Residence Hall	Kurth
F. W. Olin Building	
Fondren-Jones Science Center	
Heather McGaughey Rehearsal Hall	Heather Hall
Herman Brown Residence Hall	
Hugh Roy and Lillie Cullen Building	
J. E. and L. E. Mabee Residence Hall	
J. E. and L. E. Mabee Commons	
Jesse H. and Mary Gibbs Jones Foyer	
Jesse H. and Mary Gibbs Jones Theater	
Jim and Pat Walzel Lobby	·
Joe S. Mundy Hall	•
Julie Puett Howry Center	· ·
Lois Perkins Chapel	
Ludwig H. Merzbach Room	
Marvin D. Henderson, Sr. Tennis Courts	
Mood-Bridwell Hall	
Moody-Shearn Residence Hall	
Red & Charline McCombs Campus Center	
Robert K. Moses, Jr. Field	
Rockwell Family Baseball Field	
Sand Volleyball Court	
Sarofim School of Fine Arts Gallery	
Snyder Athletic Field	
Taylor-Sanders Softball Field	
Alma Thomas Fine Arts Center	
The Cove	
Varsity Athletic Fields	,
The Wilhelmina Cullen Welcome Center	
Wm. Chris & Tina M. Mathers Box Office	Rox Ottice

FURTHER READING

Associated Press, *The Associated Press Stylebook* or *www.apstylebook.com* (call the Office of Marketing and Communications for login info).