

THE ST. OLAF STYLE GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Which is it: St. Olaf or Saint Olaf? Is it email or e-mail? What about commas — should you put one before the “and”? Does it matter?

Yes, it does matter. Consistency in writing style lets the reader concentrate on the content without being distracted by variations in spelling and punctuation from one page to the next. Having a manual keeps writers and editors from having to reinvent rules every time a new project comes along. Adhering to an agreed-upon style gives each campus publication a voice that harmonizes with those from other areas of the college — and makes their use by other media as easy as possible.

This style guide is offered to bring consistency to non-scholarly, mass-media publications and correspondence written for and about St. Olaf College. It addresses many of the frequently asked questions about style and some of the common errors. In general, it looks to *The Chicago Manual of Style* for guidance on word usage, spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation.

This guide is not intended to be comprehensive. For information not covered in this publication, please consult *The Chicago Manual of Style 16th Edition (2010)*. The dictionary of record is *Webster’s New World Dictionary*. It should be consulted for spelling, hyphenation, and word breaks.

WHAT THIS GUIDE COVERS

Within this guide you will find information on the following topics. If you do not find an answer to your question here, please consult the references noted above or email Kari VanDerVeen in the Office of Marketing and Communications at vanderve@stolaf.edu.

- The name of the college
- Use of the college logo, seal, and athletic marks
- St. Olaf-specific terms
- Abbreviations
- Academic terminology
- Capitalization
- Computer and Internet terminology
- Numbers/numerals
- Punctuation
- Religious terminology
- Titles: academic, courtesy, and religious
- Troublesome words and terms
- Writing about music: A style sheet

THE NAME OF THE COLLEGE

The official name of the college is St. Olaf College, or, on second use in a publication, St. Olaf. Never spell out the word “saint” as part of the name of the college.

Right: St. Olaf College
Wrong: Saint Olaf College

USE OF THE COLLEGE LOGO, SEAL, AND ATHLETIC MARKS

Please refer to the “Graphic Identity Program” document for the proper usage of the college logo, seal, and athletic marks. You can find a PDF of this document and downloadable images at stolaf.edu/offices/communications/standards. All questions related to use of the college logo should be directed to the Office of Communications at x3032.

ST. OLAF-SPECIFIC TERMS

The following St. Olaf-specific words and terms are commonly misspelled or referred to incorrectly. The correct spelling and usage is below. Please note the placement of apostrophes, hyphens, and commas.

Campus Site Names

Ade Christenson Complex
Boe Memorial Chapel
Buntrock Commons
Christiansen Hall of Music
Dittmann Center
the Hill (“the” isn’t capitalized unless it’s at the beginning of a sentence: She loved her time on the Hill.)
Kings’ Dining Room
Lion’s Pause
Manitou Field
Manitou Heights
Mellby Hall
Memorial Tower
Norway Valley
Old Main
Regents Hall of Natural and Mathematical Sciences
Rølvaag Memorial Library
Skifter Hall
Skoglund Center
Skoglund Center Auditorium
Skoglund Field House
St. Olaf Bookstore
Theater Building
Tostrud Center

Departments, majors, and academic programs

American Conversations program
Asian Conversations program
the Great Conversation (“the” is not capitalized unless beginning a sentence)
the Science Conversation (“the” is not capitalized unless beginning a sentence)
Department of Mathematics, Statistics, and Computer Science (MSCS)

Events

Baccalaureate
Celebration Weekend
Commencement, Commencement 2011 (exception: lowercase in general references, such as “commencement exercises”)
Founders Day
Homecoming and Family Weekend (do not use ampersand)
St. Olaf Christmas Festival
Week One

General, administrative

Alumni and Parent Relations (do not use ampersand)
Board of Regents
Board of Regents Student Affairs Committee
Board of Regents Student Committee (BORSC)
Bon Appétit Management Company
Class of 2011 (“Class” is always capitalized in this case: the Class of 2014, the Class of 1955)
Dean of Students Office
Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP)
Howard and Edna Hong Kierkegaard Library
Information and Instructional Technologies (IIT)
International and Off-Campus Studies Office
Lilly Endowment Program

Lilly Program for the Discernment of Lives of Worth and Service
Multicultural Affairs and Community Outreach, Office of (MACO)
Norwegian-American Historical Association (NAHA)
President's Office
Recreation, Exercise Science, and Athletics (RESA)
Registrar's Office
Shaw-Olson Center for College History
Student Support Services program (SSS)
Telecommunications Office
Treasurer's Office
TRiO Programs
Upward Bound (UB)

Phrases

Um! Yah! Yah! (A popular phrase from — and title of — the St. Olaf fight song; note that an exclamation and space follows each word)
Fram, Fram, Kristmenn, Krossmenn (the motto of St. Olaf College; it means "Forward, Forward, People of Christ, People of the Cross")
Fram! Fram! St. Olaf! (A popular phrase and title of the college hymn)

Student groups, ensembles, and teams

American Choral Directors Association
Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA)
Gay, Lesbian, or Whatever (GLOW!)
InterVarsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF)
Karibu Association
St. Olaf Band, Choir, and Orchestra (only capitalized when it's St. Olaf Band, St. Olaf Choir, or St. Olaf Orchestra; "band," "choir," or "orchestra" in reference to the ensemble is lowercased)
St. Olaf Garden Research and Organic Works Farm (STOGROW)
Student Activities Committee (SAC)
Student Alumni Association

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations and acronyms

When in doubt, spell out the word. In general, avoid using acronyms that aren't well-known, and avoid using a number of acronyms in one article. Do not follow an organization's full name with an abbreviation or acronym in parentheses if there is no second reference to the organization. Names not commonly known to the public should not be reduced to acronyms solely to save a few words. Use periods with abbreviations that appear in lowercase letters (e.g., a.k.a., etc.) but do not use periods with abbreviations in capital letters (NATO, AIDS, MIAC).

Right: St. Olaf is a member of the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC). The MIAC is highly competitive, and members regularly see post-season regional and national competition.

Wrong: The meeting brought together members of the CDC, the FBI, and the APWU.

With dates or numerals

Use the abbreviations a.m., p.m., A.D., and B.C. These abbreviations should only be used following a number.

Right: In 450 B.C.; at 9:30 a.m.

Wrong: This a.m. she lectured on Laban's system of movement.

In numbered addresses used in running text

- Do not abbreviate avenue, boulevard, and street in numbered addresses:
Right: He lives at 1520 Manitou Street.
- Abbreviate NW, NE, SW, SE (do not use periods in the abbreviation)
- Names of numbered streets should always be in numeral form (this is a departure from *The Chicago Manual of Style*)
Right: The store is located at 214 1st Street NW.

Months

Do not abbreviate names of months or days of the week. They are always spelled out, whether alone or in dates. When a year accompanies the date, it should be set off by commas.

Right: May 26, 2008, was a sad day for film buffs.

States

Names of states should always be spelled out when standing alone and when they follow the name of a city. When following the name of a city, the state should be followed by a comma.

Right: Lake Bluff, Illinois, was incorporated in 1895.

ACADEMIC TERMINOLOGY

Every profession has specialized terms that are understood well within the field but not outside of it. Academia is certainly no exception. Indeed, academic disciplines themselves have varying requirements for professional publications. The guidelines that follow, therefore, are not intended to supplant the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* or the *ACS Style Guide*, but to make the college's communications with general audiences as clear and effective as possible.

Academic titles: For more about academic titles, including proper usage and capitalization, see **TITLES** later in this guide.

Degrees such as bachelor of arts, bachelor of science, and master of arts are general rather than specific degrees and should not be capitalized in text.

Right: He earned a bachelor of arts degree in 1995.

Right: She earned a bachelor of science with a major in biology.

Use an apostrophe with bachelor's degree and master's degree.

Right: He holds a bachelor's degree.

Abbreviations of academic degrees should be used sparingly in material for the mass media, where they are not easily translated and where distinctions between degrees of various sorts are not well understood. When they are cited, use periods and form plurals by adding "s." Avoid the possessive form.

Right: B.A., M.A., Ph.D., LL.D.

Right: B.A.s, M.A.s, Ph.D.s, LL.D.s

Wrong: BA, BAs, PhD, PhDs

Academic honors such as *cum laude* (with honor), *magna cum laude* (with great honor), and *summa cum laude* (with highest honors) should be italicized.

Right: A *summa cum laude* graduate of St. Olaf, she majored in art.

CAPITALIZATION

General

In general, avoid unnecessary capitals. When too many words are capitalized, they lose their importance and no longer attract attention.

Addresses

Capitalize the proper names of addresses. Capitalize words like "avenue" and "street" when used with more than one street name.

Right: Elm Street, St. Olaf Avenue, Northfield Boulevard

Right: Elm and Oak Streets, Northfield and Cannon City Boulevards

Academic majors, degrees, and honors

Except for languages (English, French, Norwegian, etc.) and studies related to geographical areas, the names of academic disciplines are not proper nouns and should not be capitalized. This includes references to disciplines in major fields of study, programs, and concentrations.

Right: He is a music major who also pursued Russian area studies.

Right: He majored in American racial and multicultural studies and completed a concentration in management studies.

Academic courses

Capitalize and use Arabic numerals. Put the formal name of the course in italics.

Right: History 642: *America in Vietnam*

Right: Great Conversation 113: *The Tradition Beginning: The Greeks and the Hebrews*

Academic departments, divisions, and disciplines

Capitalize the full, formal names of academic departments, faculties, and divisions. Do not capitalize the names of academic disciplines.

Right: the Department of History, the History Department

Right: the Department of English, the English Department

Right: She teaches mathematics.

Right: She became the academic administrative assistant of the Mathematics Department in 2001.

Right: He presented his findings to the Natural Sciences and Mathematics Faculty, one of the five divisions of the college's academic program.

Academic and administrative programs and committees

Avoid capitalizing these unless using the full formal name of a committee, center, group, program, or initiative.

Right: She will visit the Center for Integrative Studies this afternoon.

Right: She will visit the center this afternoon.

Right: He is the chair of the Curriculum and Educational Policies Committee.

Right: She coordinates the benefits program at the college.

Administrative offices and divisions

Capitalize the formal names of administrative offices and divisions. Lowercase casual references. (Exception: In address blocks, directories, and tabular formats, the casual name may be capitalized.)

Right: The staff in the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations is very helpful.

Right: Her work in alumni and parent relations is very satisfying.

Right: That will be handled by the Office of Human Resources.

Right: The office that oversees annual giving is part of the Advancement and College Relations Division.

Centuries and decades

Use numerals when describing centuries and decades (this is a departure from *The Chicago Manual of Style*). Lowercase the word "century" except when it is part of a title. Be sure to use a hyphen when "century" is modifying a noun.

Right: the 20th century

Right: 18th-century literature, in the course *19th-Century Myths*

Classes

Do not capitalize individual class designations: first-year student, sophomore, junior, senior. (Note the hyphenation of the words

“first” and “year” when used as an adjective modifying a noun.) Do not capitalize generic references, e.g., the senior class. Do capitalize the formal names of organized entities: the Class of 1979, the Class of '92 Reunion Gift Committee.

Conferences and Events

Full names of meetings, conferences, etc., are capitalized. A “the” preceding the name is lowercased even when part of the official title. Terms like “society” and “conference” should be lowercased outside the formal name. Put substantive titles of individual conferences in quotation marks.

Right: Republican National Convention

Right: The annual convention of the American Medical Association will be held in August.

Right: She really enjoyed the International Reading Association’s Chicago convention, “Great Teachers Inspire the World.”

Ensembles, teams, etc.

The words “band,” “choir,” “orchestra,” “football,” “soccer,” etc., are not capitalized on second reference to one of those organizations.

Right: A member of the St. Olaf Band, he was pursuing an independent major through the Center for Integrative Studies.

Right: A member of the band, he could usually be found at the center.

Wrong: A member of the Band, he was also a familiar sight at the Center.

Events

Capitalize the formal names of specific events occurring at the college: Commencement 2002, Fall Open House, Honors Day 2002, the Dittmann Center Dedication.

Right: New York City firefighter Brenda Berkman was selected to be the keynote speaker for Commencement 2002.

Right: Her parents will attend Commencement at St. Olaf.

Right: Fall Open House will be held October 15.

Geographical terms

Capitalize north, south, east, and west when they are part of specific geographic regions or official names of organizations. Don’t capitalize general compass directions.

Specific

the Midwest

the Western Hemisphere

General

the east entrance

the western United States

Names like iPod

Brand names that begin with a lowercase letter followed by a capital letter retain the lowercase letter, even at the beginning of a sentence or heading.

Nationality, ethnicity, and dual heritage

Capitalize names of national and ethnic groups of people. Compound proper nouns — even in adjective form — are *not* hyphenated.

Right: American Indian, Latin American, Arab, British

Right: She has a strong voice in the African American community.

Right: There’s a really good Japanese American restaurant just around the corner.

Plurals of proper nouns that include a generic term

The generic term in a proper noun is capitalized if used in the plural.

Right: Fifty-Fifth and Fifty-Seventh Streets, the Thames and Mersey Rivers, the American and French Revolutions

Publications and other titles

Italicize the names of newspapers and magazines and the titles of books, journals, movies, television and radio programs, photographs, plays, art exhibitions, and collected works when they are in text; enclose the titles of articles, poems, and episodes of television programs in quotation marks. (For questions related to musical titles, see the music style sheet at the end of this guide.)

In titles of works and names of publications, capitalize the principal words, including all nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, and subordinating conjunctions (*if, because, as, that, etc.*). Articles (*the, a, an*) are lowercased unless they are the first or last words in a title.

Right: *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, Of Mice and Men, Gone With the Wind*

Right: *Atlantic Monthly* published his article titled "Life in a Small Town" in January.

When newspapers and periodicals are mentioned in text, an initial "the," even if it is part of the official title, is lowercased (unless it begins a sentence) and is not italicized. Foreign-language titles, however, retain the article in the original language — but only if it is an official part of the title.

Right: She reads the *Chicago Tribune* on the train.

Right: We read *Le Monde* and *Die Zeit* while traveling in Europe.

Right: Did you see the review in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine*?

When the name of a newspaper or periodical is part of the name of a building, organization, prize, or the like, it is capitalized but not italicized.

Right: Los Angeles Times Book Award

Right: Tribune Tower

Seasons, days of the week

The names of the days of the week and the months of the year are always capitalized. The four seasons are not capitalized when standing by themselves. They are capitalized when part of proper names.

Right: Homecoming takes place in the fall.

Right: There will be a number of information sessions during Fall Open House 2002.

Semesters

Do not capitalize fall semester or spring semester; Interim, however, is always capitalized.

Titles

In running text, titles are capitalized only if they directly precede the name of the individual. A title following the name of an individual or a title by itself is not capitalized. **However**, titles used in event listings or programs are capitalized in all instances. (For specific information about academic, courtesy, and religious titles, see **TITLES** later in this guide.)

Right: President Lars W. Boe will speak at the event.

Right: Ole E. Rølvaag, professor of Norwegian, will speak at the event.

Right: The president, Clemens M. Granskou, will speak at the event.

Right: The crowd stood as the president of the United States entered.

Right: David R. Anderson, President

W. Bruce Benson, College Pastor

John Ferguson, Organist

Exception: Titles of the holders of named professorial chairs are always capitalized in full, whether they appear before or after the holder's name:

Right: Anton Armstrong '78, the Harry R. and Thora H. Tosdal Professor of Music

Right: Tosdal Professor of Music Anton Armstrong '78

Right: John Ferguson is the Elliot and Klara Stockdal Johnson Chair of Organ and Church Music

Exception: The names of academic degrees and honors should be capitalized when following a personal name, whether abbreviated or written in full:

Right: Clyde M. Haverstick, Doctor of Law

Right: Joseph Hershall, M.D.

Right: Lee Wallek, Fellow of the Royal Academy

Exception: Some words identifying occupations or professions should not be capitalized even if they precede the name. Do not capitalize in instances such as:

Right: attorney Clarence Darrow

Right: pianist Van Cliburn

Right: music faculty member F. Melius Christiansen

Right: basketball coach Pat Summitt

COMPUTER AND INTERNET TERMINOLOGY

Listed below are common computer and Internet terms and their preferred spelling and capitalization. These rules pertain in general to text in print. Please note exceptions for Web use regarding email addresses and URLs.

email

Always use "email" without a hyphen. Do not capitalize the word unless it appears at the beginning of a sentence or list.

When including an email address in text in print, set the address in lowercase letters and italicize.

When including an email address in text on the Web, do not italicize the address. Instead, hyperlink the address. If an email address is used at the end of the sentence, use a period, but do not hyperlink the period.

e-newsletter, e-communication, e-article, e-commerce, e-marketing, e-zine

home page

"Home page" is two words and is spelled in lowercase letters except at the beginning of a sentence.

Internet

Capitalize the word Internet in all instances.

online

one word, no hyphen

URLs, web addresses

When including a URL in text in print, set the address in lowercase letters and italicize. **Do not** put "www" at the beginning of URLs. It isn't needed when typing in an address and looks antiquated.

Avoid including a complex URL in print that is difficult for readers to retype (such as *fusion.acc.stolaf.edu/inside/index.cfm?fuseaction=PastIssues*). If you can't provide a simple URL, direct readers to a main page and then give them instructions for finding the information (Example: Visit *stolaf.edu/admissions* and select "Request More Information" in the lower left-hand corner).

If a URL falls at the end of a sentence, use a period. If an address breaks between lines, split it directly before a slash or a dot that is part of the address, without an inserted hyphen.

When including a URL in text on the web, do not italicize the URL. Instead, hyperlink the address. If an Internet address falls at the end of a sentence, use a period, but do not hyperlink the period. Try to avoid "link here" structures and instead hyperlink a word

or phrase within the sentence.

Right: Visit us on the web at *stolaf.edu*.

Right: For complete details on the event, visit *stolaf.edu/admissions*.

Right: View the concert online. (With “online” hyperlinked.)

web

web page

“web page” is two words, not hyphenated, both in lowercase letters.

website

The preferred St. Olaf style is website — one word, lowercase

webmaster, webcam, webcast

One word and spelled in lowercase letters except at the beginning of sentences.

World Wide Web

Capitalize World Wide Web in all instances.

NUMBERS/NUMERALS

In text, spell out whole numbers below 10; use figures for 10 and above (this is a departure from *The Chicago Manual of Style*).

Right: They had three sons and two daughters.

Right: They had a fleet of 10 station wagons and two buses.

Right: They built four four-room houses, 10 three-room houses and 12 10-room houses.

Ages are an exception to these guidelines: Always use figures to indicate the age of a person, except at the beginning of a sentence. Ages expressed as adjectives before a noun or as a substitute for a noun should use a hyphen.

Right: A 5-year-old boy ... The girl is 2 years old. The 31-year-old researcher ...

Right: Two-year-olds are not noted for their patience.

Wrong: 2-year-olds are not noted for their patience.

Right: The professor, a woman in her 50s, recounted the changes brought about by the Title IX legislation passed in 1972.

When referring to **decades**, use numerals in full words or abbreviate the numerals, inserting an apostrophe before the two-digit number to indicate numerals that have been omitted.

Right: the 1920s, the Roaring '20s

Right: the '50s, '60s, and '70s

Wrong: the 50's, 60's, and 70's

Right: She enjoyed '70s music.

Right: In the mid-1960s, she took up jogging; before she knew it, she was running in marathons.

Percentages should always be in numeral form (unless they're at the beginning of a sentence), and “percent” should be spelled out rather than indicated with a symbol.

Right: The percentage of classes at St. Olaf with fewer than 20 students increased from 49 percent to 60 percent.

When large numbers must be spelled out, use a hyphen to connect a word ending in “y” to another word; do not use commas between other separate words that are part of one number.

Right: twenty; thirty; twenty-one; thirty-one; one hundred forty-three; one thousand one hundred fifty-five

Spell out **numerals occurring at the beginning of a sentence** or recast the sentence. There is one exception — a numeral that identifies a calendar year may be used to begin a sentence.

Right: Last year, 993 first-year students entered the college.

Right: Forty-five students entered the competition.

Wrong: 993 first-year students entered the college last year.

Right: 1999 was a very good year for job seekers.

Spell out **casual expressions using numbers**.

Right: A thousand times no!

Right: Thanks a million.

For **ordinal numbers** (first, second, etc.), spell out first through ninth when they indicate sequence in time or location. Starting with 10th, use figures.

Right: first base, the Fifth Amendment

Right: He was 11th in line.

Use 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, etc., when the sequence has been assigned in forming names. Principal examples are geographic, military, and political designations.

Right: 1st Ward, 7th Fleet, 1st Sgt.

Numbers in dates

Always use Arabic figures, without “st,” “nd,” “rd,” or “th.” (When referring to things connected with the events of September 11, 2001, however, it is permissible to use September 11th.)

Right: October 16

Wrong: October 16th

When using two years to show a period of time, separate the numbers with an “en” dash (a punctuation mark that is longer than a hyphen — see PUNCTUATION later for more details). Do not repeat the century and do not insert an apostrophe. (Exceptions include the 1999–2000 academic year, because it spanned two centuries, and anything else spanning centuries, e.g., 1985–2002.)

Right: the 2000–01 academic year

Wrong: the 2000–2001 academic year

Wrong: the 2000–’01 academic year

In a sentence, use the word “to” or “and,” not a hyphen or an “en” dash.

Right: She worked here from 1998 to 2000.

Wrong: She worked here from 1998–2000.

Right: American culture changed greatly between 1950 and 1960.

Numbers in class years

When identifying current students or alumni by their class years, the two-digit year is preceded by an apostrophe. Do not insert a comma before the year.

Right: John Smith '87, Jane Doe '00

Wrong: John Smith, '87, Jane Doe, '00

Identify alumni who have changed their names since birth, through marriage or otherwise, as follows:

first name / birth name / present last name / class year. Do not set off birth names with parentheses.

Right: Jane Doe Smith '70

Wrong: Jane (Doe) Smith '70

Identify alumni couples who share a last name as follows: first partner's first name / birth name (if different) / and class year followed by second partner's first name / birth name / the couple's present last name / and second partner's class year.

Right: John '47 and Jane Doe Smith '45

Wrong: John and Jane Doe Smith '47, '45

Right: John Smith '90 and Jane Doe-Smith '90

Typesetting note: Most word processing programs will automatically insert the apostrophe curling the wrong way (e.g., '01). Type a space in after the year, and it will curl the apostrophe the correct way (e.g., '01).

Numbers in academic grade years

Spell out and use ordinal numbers: "She coaches the ninth-grade girls soccer team."

For grades 9–12 and for college levels, use the terms sophomore, junior, and senior, but not "freshman." Always use "ninth grade" and "first-year student."

Telephone numbers

In text, local telephone numbers are written with hyphens: 507-786-2222.

Times

Use figures except for noon and midnight. A figure alone without zeroes is sufficient for the top of the hour. Use a colon to separate hours from minutes. Do not put a 12 before noon and midnight. Do not omit the periods in a.m. and p.m.

Right: 11 a.m., noon, 1 p.m., 3:30 p.m., midnight

Wrong: 2:00 p.m., 5pm

PUNCTUATION

Ampersand

Use the ampersand (&) only when it is part of a company's formal name. The ampersand should not otherwise be used in place of the word "and."

Right: Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, *U.S. News & World Report*

Right: the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations

Wrong: the Office of Alumni & Parent Relations

Apostrophe

Apostrophes indicate where letters or figures have been omitted in contractions and class years.

Right: rock 'n' roll, Lunch 'n' Learn

Right: can't

Right: Class of '77

Right: Robert Smith '77

Colon

Use a colon to introduce a formal statement. Capitalize the first word after a colon if it consists of more than one sentence or if it is a formal statement, a quotation, or speech in a dialogue.

Right: The policy is this: Students should be enrolled by September 1.

Right: She promised this: There would be no more exams.

Right: There were three criteria: expense, time, and feasibility.

Use a colon to introduce a series.

Right: There were four colors of crayons: orange, blue, green, and red.

Use a colon with no spaces to separate chapter and verse in scriptural references.

Right: Mark 4:2–6, Exodus 2:1–5

Place colons outside quotation marks or parentheses.

Right: The following are what Smith dubbed “the best movies of the ’80s”: *Annie*, *Can’t Stop the Music* ...

Comma

Use commas to separate elements in a series, and do put a comma before the conjunction in a simple series.

Right: The flag is red, white, and blue.

Use a comma to separate an introductory clause or phrase from the main clause.

Right: When he had tired of the mad pace of Northfield, he moved to New York.

The comma may be omitted after short introductory phrases if no ambiguity would result. But use the comma if its omission would slow comprehension.

Right: During the night he heard many noises.

Right: On the street below, the curious gathered.

When a conjunction such as “and,” “but,” or “for” links two clauses that could stand alone as separate complete sentences, use a comma before the conjunction in most cases. If there is no such conjunction, use a semicolon. (See Semicolon)

Right: She was glad she had paused, for a car was running the red light.

Right: She wanted to go skiing, and he wanted to go to a movie.

Right: They drove to the mall and went to the movie.

Use a comma if the subject of each clause is expressly stated. But do not use a comma when the subject of the two clauses is the same and is not repeated in the second.

Right: We are visiting Washington, and we also plan a side trip to Williamsburg.

Right: We are visiting Washington and plan to see the White House.

When “etc.” is used at the end of a series (and it should be used sparingly), set it off with commas.

Right: The professor discussed dates, tests, extra help, etc., during her opening remarks.

Use a comma for most figures greater than 999. The major exceptions are: street addresses, broadcast frequencies, room numbers, serial numbers, telephone numbers, and years.

Commas always go inside quotation marks.

Right: “When we arrive,” she said, “I want to go snorkeling.”

Dashes

There are two primary kinds of dashes, varying from one another in length.

The most commonly used dash is the “em” dash, so called because it is equal in length to a typeset lowercase “m.” Use an “em” dash — with a space on either side — to indicate an interruption, explanation, series within a phrase, or break in faltering speech or to give emphasis.

Right: “Rosebud — ” The glass ball slipped from his lifeless hand.

Right: Smith offered a plan — this was unprecedented — to raise revenues.

Wrong: Smith offered a plan - - this was unprecedented - - to raise revenues.

Right: We will fly to Paris in June — if I get a raise.

“En” dashes are the same length as a typeset “n.” They are used primarily to indicate continuing, or inclusive, numbers in dates, time, or reference numbers. Use an “en” dash — without a space on either side — to indicate the passage of a period of time. Do not precede such a phrase with the word “from,” which should only be used together with the word “to.”

Right: The growing seasons were shorter in 1995–2000. In May–June 2001 there were 12 incidents.

Right: The reception will take place from 1 to 3 p.m. in the Kings’ Room.

Wrong: The reception will take place from 1–3 p.m. in the Kings’ Room.

Right: The scripture reading for the day was Ruth 1:16–17.

Use an en dash followed by a space when the concluding date of an expression is in the future: John Doe (2001–)

The en dash is also used in place of a hyphen in a compound adjective, one element of which consists of two words or a hyphenated word:

Right: In the post–Civil War period ...

Right: On the New York–London flight

Right: a quasi-public–quasi-judicial body

Ellipsis

Use an ellipsis to indicate the deletion of one or more words in condensing quotes, texts, and documents. Leave one full space on both sides of an ellipsis, which should consist of three periods.

Right: I ... tried to do what was best.

If the words that precede an ellipsis constitute a grammatically complete sentence, either in the original or in the condensation, place a period at the end of the last word before the ellipsis. Follow it with a regular space and an ellipsis.

Right: I no longer have a strong enough political base. ... I will not seek reelection.

Hyphen

Hyphens are joiners. Use them to avoid ambiguity or to form a single idea from two or more words. Consult a dictionary for usage in specific words.

Use a hyphen whenever ambiguity would result if it were omitted.

Right: When he recovered his health, he re-covered the leaky roof.

When a compound modifier — two or more words that express a single concept — precedes a noun, use hyphens to link all the words in the compound except the adverb “very” and all adverbs that end in “ly.”

Right: a first-quarter touchdown

Right: a full-time job

Right: a very good time was had by all

Right: an easily remembered rule

But when a modifier that would be hyphenated before a noun occurs instead after a form of the verb “to be,” the hyphen usually must be retained to avoid confusion.

Right: The man is well-known.

Right: The woman is quick-witted.

Right: The children are soft-spoken.

Right: The play is second-rate.

Use a hyphen to avoid duplicated vowels or tripled consonants.

Right: anti-intellectual

Right: pre-empt

Right: shell-like

Do not hyphenate between “non” and a word except when a double “n” is created.

Right: nonmajor

Right: nonentity

Right: non-native

Do not use a hyphen in a compound noun with vice:

Right: vice president

Right: vice chancellor

Use a hyphen, a space, and the word “to” or “and” when joining two or more hyphenated phrases ending in the same word.

Right: He received a 10- to 15-year sentence in prison.

Right: The first- and second-quarter touchdowns resulted from fumbles.

Italics

Italicize the names of newspapers and magazines and the titles of books, journals, movies, television and radio programs, photographs, plays, art exhibitions, and collected works when they are in text. Use quotation marks around the names of articles, poems, and episodes of television programs. (For questions related to musical titles, see the music style sheet at the end of this guide.)

When newspapers and periodicals are mentioned in text, an initial “the,” even if it is part of the official title, is lowercased (unless it begins a sentence) and is not italicized. Foreign-language titles, however, retain the article in the original language — but only if it is an official part of the title.

Right: She reads the *Chicago Tribune* on the train.

Right: We read *Le Monde* and *Die Zeit* while traveling in Europe.

Right: Did you see the review in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine*?

When the name of a newspaper or periodical is part of the name of a building, organization, prize, or the like, it is capitalized but not italicized.

Right: Los Angeles Times Book Award

Right: Tribune Tower

Italics are used for isolated words and phrases in a foreign language if they are likely to be unfamiliar to readers (e.g., *Honi soit qui mal y pense* is the motto of the Order of the Garter). Foreign words and phrases familiar to most readers and listed in Webster (e.g., *in vitro*, *a cappella*) are not italicized if used in an English context. If confusion might arise, however, foreign terms are best italicized and spelled as in the original language.

Parentheses and brackets

Use parentheses to add incidental information to a sentence.

Right: The recent election affected the stock market (see Diagram A), but only temporarily.

Use brackets to enclose editorial comments, corrections, or explanations.

Right: Many of them [the candidates] questioned the policy.

Place a period outside a closing parenthesis if the material inside is not a sentence (such as this fragment).

Right: (A parenthetical sentence such as this one takes a period before the closing parenthesis.)

Periods

In text, follow a period with a *single space* before beginning the next sentence. Omit periods in vertical lists unless one or more of the items are complete sentences.

Plurals

Plurals are formed in many ways in the English language but only very rarely by adding an apostrophe and an "s" (see below). Consult the dictionary for a definitive answer.

Form the plural of single letters by adding " 's":

Right: Mind your p's and q's.

Right: He brought home a report card with four A's and two B's.

Form the plural of figures by adding "s":

Right: The custom began in the 1920s.

Right: The airline has two 727s.

Right: Temperatures will be in the low 20s.

Form the plural of multiple letters by adding "s":

Right: She knows her ABCs.

Right: I gave him five IOUs.

Right: Four VIPs were there.

Possessives

With plural nouns not ending in "s," add an apostrophe and an "s":

Right: the alumni's contributions, women's rights

With plural nouns ending in "s," add only an apostrophe:

Right: the churches' needs, the girls' toys, the horses' food, the ships' wake, states' rights,
the VIPs' entrance

With nouns that are plural in form but singular in meaning, add only an apostrophe. Often, these references would be better

phrased by recasting the sentence:

Right: mathematics' rules, measles' effects

Right: the rules of mathematics, the effects of measles

With singular nouns not ending in "s," add an apostrophe and an "s":

Right: the church's needs, the girl's toys, the horse's food, the ship's route, the VIP's seat

With singular common nouns ending in "s," add an apostrophe and an "s" unless the next word begins with "s":

Right: the hostess's invitation, the hostess' seat; the witness's answer, the witness' story

With singular proper names ending in "s," use only an apostrophe:

Right: Achilles' heel, Descartes' theories, Hercules' labors

Personal interrogative and relative pronouns have separate forms for the possessive. None of them involves an apostrophe:

Right: its, mine, ours, your, yours, his, hers, theirs, whose

With joint possession, use a possessive form after only the last word if ownership is joint. If the objects are individually owned, use a possessive form after both words.

Right: Fred and Sylvia's apartment, Fred and Sylvia's stocks

Right: Fred's and Sylvia's libraries, combined, contained every Hardy Boys book ever published.

Quotation marks

Use quotation marks to surround the exact words of a speaker or writer.

Italicize the names of newspapers and magazines and the titles of books, journals, movies, television and radio programs, photographs, plays, art exhibitions, and collected works when they are in text. Use quotation marks around the names of articles, poems, and episodes of television programs.

A period is placed inside the quotation mark.

Right: "Remember your appointment, Harry."

A colon should be placed outside the quotation mark.

Right: "Don't tread on me": that was their motto.

A comma is always placed inside the quotation mark.

Right: "There's no place like home," Dorothy said.

A semicolon is placed outside the quotation mark.

Right: They were advised to "follow the yellow brick road"; they did so.

Place the exclamation point or question mark inside the quotation mark when it is a part of the quoted matter. Otherwise, place it outside.

Right: "Remember the Alamo!"

Right: I shall slap you if you tell me again that "Love means never having to say you're sorry"!

Semicolon

In general, use the semicolon to indicate a greater separation of thought and information than a comma can convey but less than a period implies.

The package was due last week; it arrived today.

Use semicolons to separate elements of a series when individual segments contain material that also must be set off by commas. Note that the semicolon is used before the final “and” in such a series.

He leaves a son, John Smith of Chicago; three daughters, Jane Smith of Wichita, Kansas, Mary Smith of Denver, and Susan, wife of William Kingsby, of Boston; and a sister, Martha, wife of Robert Warren, of Omaha, Nebraska.

RELIGIOUS TERMINOLOGY

Capitalize the names for the Bible and its sections and of other sacred works.

Right: Old Testament
Right: King James Version
Right: Talmud

Lowercase “bible” as a nonreligious term.

Right: My dictionary is my bible.

Lowercase “biblical” in all uses.

Names of deities are all proper nouns and should be capitalized. Pronouns referring to deities should not be capitalized.

TITLES (ACADEMIC, COURTESY, AND RELIGIOUS)

In text, titles are capitalized if they directly precede the name of the individual. A title following the name of an individual or a title by itself is not capitalized. **However**, titles used in event listings or programs are capitalized in all instances.

On second reference to a person, use only the last name unless another person mentioned in the document has the same last name. In that case, use first name and last name to avoid confusion.

Right: Pastor Bruce Benson gave the sermon. Benson focused on the issue of discrimination.
Right: The responsibility was given to Professor of Economics David Emery and Associate Professor of Economics Mary Emery. Mary Emery will serve as the committee’s chair.
Right: Sen. Lars Smith introduced the bill. Smith, a long-time advocate of ...
Right: 1st Lt. Jane Jones was in charge of the exercise. Jones ...
Right: The Reverend Elmer Gantry conducted the service. Gantry ...
Right: Ingrid Bergman, professor of media studies, was the moderator.
Right: David R. Anderson, President
W. Bruce Benson, College Pastor

Academic titles

Academic ranks and titles are specific and not interchangeable. It is not appropriate to bestow the title “Professor” upon someone who holds the rank of instructor — or vice versa. A person is “Professor of,” “Associate Professor of,” or “Assistant Professor of” a discipline or “Instructor in” a discipline.

Right: Associate Professor of Biology Jane Doe
Right: Jane Doe, associate professor of biology, will be the keynote speaker.
Wrong: Jane Doe is Associate Professor of Physics and Director of the Center for the Study of UFOs.

Right: Instructor in English William Shakespeare

Wrong: Instructor of English Yukio Mishima

Exception: Titles of the holders of named professorial chairs are always capitalized in full, whether they appear before or after the holder's name:

Right: Anton Armstrong '78, the Harry R. and Thora H. Tosdal Professor of Music

Right: Tosdal Professor of Music Anton Armstrong '78

Right: John Ferguson is the Elliot and Klara Stockdal Johnson Chair of Organ and Church Music

The title "artist in residence" is not hyphenated, even when placed directly before the faculty member's name.

Right: St. Olaf Artist in Residence David Hagedorn plays the vibraphone on the new Brian Setzer Orchestra CD.

Courtesy titles

Use courtesy titles ("Dr.," "Mr.," "Mrs.," "Ms.," "Miss") only in formal materials such as invitations.

Do not use "Mr." in an informal reference unless it is combined with "Mrs.": Mr. and Mrs. John Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Smith.

On first reference, faculty members should be referred to by their full academic title and their first and last name. On second reference, their last name is sufficient. Do not use the courtesy title "Dr."

Religious titles

The first reference to a clergyperson normally should include a capitalized title before the person's name. The abbreviation Rev. is used when no "the" precedes the title. If "the" precedes the title, then Reverend should be spelled out. On second reference, use the person's last name only with no title.

Right: the Reverend William Sanborn

Right: Rev. William Sanborn

Right: The Reverend William Sanborn led the congregation in song. A former member of the St. Olaf Choir, Sanborn ...

Members of the clergy are known as "ministers." "Pastor" applies if a minister leads a congregation. Do not routinely use "pastor" before an individual's name except, as at St. Olaf, when that is the person's job title.

TROUBLESOME WORDS AND TERMS

The following words and terms are often misused.

A, an

Use the article "a" before consonant sounds.

Right: a historic event, a one-year term (sounds as if it begins with a "w"), a united stand (sounds like "you" rather than "uh" as in "an utter disappointment")

Use the article "an" before vowel sounds:

Right: an energy crisis, an honorable man (the "h" is silent), an NBA record (sounds like it begins with the letter "e"), an 1890s celebration

Advisor, adviser

"Advisor" is the preferred St. Olaf spelling.

Affect, effect

"Affect," as a verb, means to influence.

Right: The game will affect the standings.

“Affect” as a noun is best avoided.

“Effect,” as a verb, means to cause:

Right: He will effect many changes in environmental policy.

“Effect,” as a noun, means result:

Right: The effect was overwhelming.

Right: He underestimated the effect of his actions.

Afterward, backward, downward, forward, toward, upward

Note that there is no “s” at the end of these words (it is not afterwards, etc.)

A lot

Always two words.

All right

Do not use the disputed term “alright.”

Alumnus, alumna, alumni, alumnae

The word “alumnus” indicates a man who has attended or graduated from a school; an “alumna” is a woman who has done so. When referring to a group of men and women who have attended or graduated from a school or to more than one alumnus, use the word “alumni.” When referring to an exclusively female group, use the word “alumnae.” Do not use the phrase “alumni/ae” to refer to mixed groups. **Avoid the word “alum.”**

Awhile/a while

“Awhile” is an adverb. (Let’s stop awhile to stretch our legs.) The phrase “a while” follows “for” or “in.” (I am going to read for a while after work.)

Between, among

“Between” refers to two people or things. (Mother split the bread evenly between the two of us.) “Among” implies collective relationships of more than two. (Among the students, there were only three who had done the homework.)

Book signing

Catalog

Do not use the spelling catalogue

Chair

Not chairman/chairwoman/chairperson

Dialogue

Disc, disk

The preferred spelling for CDs and CD-ROMs is “disc.” “Disk” is preferred for floppy and hard drives.

E.g. or i.e.

“e.g.” means “for example.” Do not confuse it with “i.e.,” which means “that is.” Both “e.g.” and “i.e.” are always followed by a comma.

Emeritus, Emerita, Emeriti, Emeritae

These titles are an honorable recognition of the service of those who have contributed substantially to the life and mission of the college. For faculty at St. Olaf, it normally is recommended by the dean of the college and conferred by the Board of Regents upon retirement. The word “emeritus” indicates a man who has retired from his rank or title; an “emerita” is a woman who has done so. When referring to a group of men and women who have retired from their rank or title or to more than one emeritus, use the word “emeriti.” When referring exclusively to a female group, use the word “emeritae.” The term should be included in academic

titles as follows:

- Right: Professor Emeritus of Music Charles Forsberg
Right: Professor Emerita of Biology Alice Burton
Right: Associate Professor Emeritus of English Graham Frear
Right: Instructor Emeritus in Physical Education David Buss

Fewer, less

In general, use “fewer” for individual items that you can number, “less” for bulk or quantity.

- Right: Fewer than ten applicants called. (Individuals.)
Right: I had less than \$50 in my pocket. (An amount.)
Right: I had fewer than 50 \$1 bills in my pocket. (Individual items.)
Wrong: The trend is toward more machines and less people. (People in this sense refers to individuals.)
Wrong: The house was fewer than 60 years old. (Years in this sense refers to a period of time, not individual years.)

Field house

Foreign words and cities

Isolated words and phrases in a foreign language that are likely to be unfamiliar to readers should be put in italics (e.g., *Honi soit qui mal y pense* is the motto of the Order of the Garter). Foreign words and phrases familiar to most readers and listed in Webster (e.g., *in vitro*, *a cappella*) are not italicized if used in an English context. If confusion might arise, however, foreign terms are best italicized and spelled as in the original language.

For foreign place names, use the primary spelling in *Webster's New World Dictionary*. If it has no entry, follow the National Geographic Atlas of the World.

Health care

Health care is two words, no hyphen, in all cases.

Kings' Dining Room

The Kings' Dining Room complex at St. Olaf is plural *and* possessive.

Lifelong

Long-term

Master class

Name tag

Over, more than

Generally use “over” when referring to spatial relationships: “The ball flew over the wall.” While “over” may, at times, be used with numerals (“He is over 30.” “She paid over \$2,000 for the auction item.”), you should generally use “more than” with numbers and quantities (“She raised more than \$300,000.”). Let your ear be your guide in these cases.

Percent

Percent is always one word. Do not use % except in charts or tabular material.

Question-and-answer session

Staff

Use “staffed” as a transitive verb rather than “manned.”

- Right: She staffed the registration table during Homecoming and Family Weekend.

Theater, theatre

At St. Olaf, the theater major, the Department of Theater/Theater Department, titles of faculty members teaching in the department, the activities of the department or of its faculty and staff, and the dramatic arts in general all use the American spelling “theater.”

When referring to theatrical performance spaces, also use the American spelling “theater” — except where a formal name uses the British spelling, “theatre” (e.g., the Shubert Theatre and the Children’s Theatre, but the Guthrie Theater).

The names of the theaters at St. Olaf are the Kelsey Theater and the Haugen Theater, located in the Theater Building, and the Viking Theater, located in Buntrock Commons.

Right: She found her vocation at St. Olaf in Theater 110: *Introduction to Theater*. The Theater Department faculty provided an overview of theater history, as well as exposure to works of great dramatic literature.

Right: The Guthrie Theater opened on May 7, 1963, with a production of *Hamlet*.

Right: St. Olaf Professor of Theater Jane Doe directed the production.

T-shirt

Ultimate Frisbee

United States, U.S.

United States as a noun should be spelled out, but U.S. (with periods) is acceptable when used as an adjective.

Who, whom, that, which

Use “who” and “whom” in referring to people and to animals with a name.

Right: He threw the ball to Timmy, who threw it to Lassie, who placed it under the nose of the horse.

Right: John Smith is the man who helped me.

Right: She didn’t notice to whom the package was addressed.

Use “that” and “which” in referring to inanimate objects and to animals without a name.

Right: She hugged him and the puppy that he was holding.

Wrong: She threw the Frisbee to the dog who was standing by Timmy.

Right: The government awarded the contract to the companies that were based in California.

Right: The government awarded the contract to two women who lived in California.

“That” is used in a defining or essential clause, “which” in a non-defining or non-essential clause. “Which” generally requires a comma. Consider the difference in meaning between these statements:

Right: The department that offers writing-intensive courses is superior.

Right: The department, which offers writing-intensive courses, is superior.

Worldwide, nationwide, citywide, campuswide, collegewide, Chicago-wide, university-wide

Compounds formed with “wide” are normally closed, but are hyphenated after proper nouns, after most words of three or more syllables, or simply to avoid a cumbersome appearance.

WRITING ABOUT MUSIC: A STYLE SHEET

A cappella

Two p’s, two l’s, don’t italicize. Defined by *Webster’s New World Dictionary* as “without instrumental accompaniment; said of choral singing.”

“Conductor” vs. “director”

A “conductor” is “a director of an orchestra, choir, etc.,” according to *Webster’s New World Dictionary*, while a “director” is one “who directs a play, motion picture, etc.” Refer to the leader of a musical ensemble as “conductor” and to the person who oversees the production of a play — or the annual Christmas Festival — as a “director.”

Musical keys

Capitalize letters standing for musical keys.

Right: middle C, the key of G major, the key of F-sharp minor

“Premier” and “premiere”

“Premier” (adjective or noun) means first in importance or rank, chief, foremost; any chief official. “Premier” (verb) means to exhibit or perform for the first time. “Premiere” (adjective or noun) is a first performance or showing of a play, movie, or musical work.

Right: The premier collegiate choral ensemble/band/orchestra in America; the premier of British Columbia

Right: The ensemble will premier the piece in Oslo.

Right: The premiere of “Sonata for Sirens” was scheduled for late December.

Right: The audience eagerly awaited the premiere performance of the piece.

Titles and subtitles of musical pieces

Generic titles (which use descriptors such as symphony, concerto, fantasia, etc., and often have an identifying opus or index number appended) are capitalized, but not italicized.

Bach: Toccata and Fugue in D Minor, BWV 565

Haydn: Baryton Trio No. 71 in A Major, Hob. XI: 71

Beethoven: Violin Concerto in D Major, op. 61

Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony

True titles (titles assigned by the composer) are italicized.

Rossini: *La gazza ladra*

Berlioz: *Symphonie fantastique*

Common names (widely recognized popular names) are in quotation marks.

Mozart: Symphony No. 41 in C Major (“Jupiter”)

If it is unclear whether to treat a title as a true title or a common name, use quotation marks.

the “Italian” Symphony

the “New World” Symphony

Song titles should be in italics.

La danza

L’Heure exquise

Arias drawn from operas are capitalized and put in quotation marks.

“Where’er You Walk,” from Handel’s *Semele*

The titles of **Latin liturgical works** are capitalized, as are their constituent movements.

Titles: Mass, Requiem, Te Deum.

Movements: Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus, Agnus Dei, etc.

Movement titles are capitalized.

Allegro

Adagio

When an **opus or catalog number** is used as sole identification of the work, it is not preceded by a comma.

Trio op. 97

Adagio K. 411

Concert programs

The standard listing of a work in a concert program gives a formal title with key and index identifier, the composer's full name, and the composer's dates. Movements follow, with foreign words italicized. Movements should be indented.

Orchestral Suite No. 3 in D Major Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Ouverture

Air

Gavotte I

Gavotte II

Bourrée

Gigue

Four Dance-Episodes from *Rodeo* Aaron Copland (1900–90)

Buckaroo Holiday

Corral Nocturne

Saturday Night Waltz

Hoe Down

For a movement identified by both a title and a tempo indicator, use a colon after the title.

Symphony No. 3 in Eb Major ("Eroica"), opus 55 Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Allegro con brio

Marcia funebre: Adagio assai

Scherzo: Allegro vivace

Finale: Allegro molto

It is appropriate to translate movement titles that might not otherwise be understood, particularly if they are not translated elsewhere in the program. The translation should follow the movement title in parentheses and should be in quotes but not italicized.

Concerto for Orchestra Bela Bartok (1881–1945)

Introduzione

Giuoco delle coppie ("Game of Paris")

Elegia

Intermezzo interrotto ("Interrupted Intermezzo")

Finale

For first performances, give the date of composition and indicate the occasion

The Big Bang and Beyond (1985) Steven Mackey (b. 1953)

(Premiere Performance)

For a work that tells a story, it can be helpful to list the incidents in the program

The Moldau (Vltava) from *My Fatherland (Ma Vlast)* Bedřich Smetana (1824–84)

The Two Sources of the Moldau

Forest Hunt

Peasant

Wedding

Moonlight: Nymphs' Dance

St. John's Rapids

The Moldau in Its Greatest Breadth

Vyšehrad