



OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

Editorial Style Guide

Online and print

Introduction

These guidelines serve to ensure consistency and accuracy in the print and digital communications of Mount Holyoke College. In particular, please note the correct spelling and style of terms specific to the College. If you have questions, suggestions or corrections, please contact the [Office of Communications and Marketing](#).

The latest online edition of the [Associated Press Stylebook Online](#) serves as Mount Holyoke's primary reference for style. Check this source first for questions of language, style, usage and spelling. The AP style guide can be accessed through LITS:

- Start at the LITS website: lits.mtholyoke.edu
- Under the research menu, choose Databases A-Z
- Choose AP Stylebook

If you are accessing the guide on campus, you will connect directly without any need to log in. From off campus, you will be prompted to enter your Mount Holyoke credentials.

AP relies on [Webster's New World College Dictionary](#), although the College prefers [Merriam Webster](#). When alternate spellings of a word are included in the dictionary, use the first.

Why the Associated Press

The Associated Press style guide was instituted in January 2017 as the basis of Mount Holyoke's editorial style in large part because most media outlets worldwide follow it. An informal survey of communications professionals in higher education found overwhelmingly that AP is the style of choice for colleges and universities. Providing content in AP style — or very close to it — makes it easier for the media to repurpose.

The goal of Mount Holyoke's editorial style is to provide guidance around written language. Given that language is organic and constantly changing, this guide, like the AP style guide it's based on, is updated frequently. Suggestions and feedback are invited and always welcomed.

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A few notes about College terminology

Mount Holyoke is the leading gender-diverse women's college. Do not use gender affirming. Do not use "a historically women's college."

Number of doctorates

Data from June 2024, per Polly Prewitt-Freilino, Institutional Research:

Mount Holyoke is ranked #1 among national liberal arts colleges for women earning PhDs in the life sciences, and we are virtually tied with Wellesley for the #1 spot for women earning PhDs in all STEM fields.

Is Mount Holyoke the oldest women's college in the country/world? Not exactly.

Chartered in 1836, Mount Holyoke appears to be the oldest school that was established from inception as an institution of higher education for women — a teaching seminary — that is still a women's college. It is **not** the oldest women's educational institution to be in continuous operation. [According to Wikipedia](#), that distinction goes to Salem College in North Carolina, which was founded in 1772.

Academia and Mount Holyoke College terms

Mount Holyoke College, Mount Holyoke, the College, MHC

Use the full formal name on first mention.

Never use Holyoke or Mt. Holyoke. (Mt. Holyoke refers to the mountain.)

Exception: The College's internal website is my.mtholyoke

As of July 1, 2024:

President Danielle R. Holley

Academic and professional titles

In running text, capitalize and spell out formal titles such as president, chancellor, chairman, etc. when they precede a name, but lowercase in other uses. In lists, titles are usually capitalized.

Associate Professor Alison Jones

Alison Jones, associate professor of biological sciences

President Barack Obama

Barack Obama, president

Use Dr. in first reference only as a formal title before the name of a physician, veterinarian or

dentist, not a faculty member or administrator. Do not capitalize an occupational designation, only a true title.

The speech was given by Dr. Jane Smith. Dr. Smith spoke for 30 minutes.

We met President Obama.

The president will speak at the dinner.

Our speaker will be Alison Jones, associate dean for engagement.

Please meet Jane Smith, master electrician.

Capitalize the official names of honorary chaired and university professorships even when title comes after the name. For those titles that are not honorary or for references after the name of the professor, use lowercase.

Indira V. Peterson, David B. Truman Professor of Asian Studies, was the keynote speaker. But: Her years of hard work were acknowledged when she was promoted to professor.

Capitalize the formal names of groups and committees. Lowercase the words such as “committee” or “council” when they stand alone.

Student Government Association, Academic Priorities Committee, the committee, the council

See also [Courtesy titles](#).

Alum and alums

As the leading gender-diverse women’s college, Mount Holyoke College and the Alum Association use inclusive language in all publications and / or institutional messages.

Use *alum* (singular) and *alums* (plural) for those who have attended Mount Holyoke for at least two semesters. This term applies to the graduate program as well as undergraduate.

RULE	 DO NOT USE	 USE
Use “alum,” the singular, in place of “alumna” or “alumnus.”	The <i>alumna</i> met with students	The <i>alum</i> met with students
	A notable <i>alumnus</i> of the College	A notable <i>alum</i> of the College
	She is an <i>alumna</i> of the College from the class of 1949.	She is an <i>alum</i> of the College from the class of 1949.
Use “alums” as the plural, in place of “alumnae” or “alumni.”	<i>Alumnae</i> are excited for Mountain Day	<i>Alums</i> are excited for Mountain Day
	More <i>alumnae</i> than ever	More <i>alums</i> than ever

	returned to campus this year for Reunion.	returned to campus this year for Reunion.
	Thank you to the <i>alumni</i> who support the College	Thank you to the alums who support the College
When using “alum” as an adjective that modifies a noun, use the singular:	<i>Alums</i> engagement is a priority	Alum engagement is a priority An alum’s engagement is important
	“Leveraging <i>Alums</i> Experiences: A Workshop for Seniors”	“Leveraging Alum Experiences: A Workshop for Seniors”
	“ <i>Alums</i> Travel Program”	“ Alum Travel Program”
	“ <i>Alums’</i> Book Club”	“ Alum Book Club”
	“ <i>Alums’</i> Communities”	“ Alum Communities”
Do not use “alum” to refer to the plural.	We reached out to many <i>alum</i> for their feedback	We reached out to many alums for their feedback
Effective July 1, 2024, any events (conferences, symposia, etc.) that are supported by the College must use inclusive language to reflect our mission and values.	The <i>Alumnae</i> Association	The Alum Association of Mount Holyoke College uplifts Mount Holyoke alums Any alum can submit class notes for the Alumnae Quarterly The European Alum network is governed by the Mount Holyoke European Alum Council
	The <i>Alumnae</i> Directory	The Alum Directory
	The <i>Alumnae</i> Online Book Club	The Alum Online Book Club
	<i>alumnae</i> .mtholyoke.edu	mtholyoke.edu/ alums
If you are unsure about when to use “alum” or “alums,” you can also choose to substitute	As a proud <i>alumna</i> of Mount Holyoke	As a proud graduate of Mount Holyoke
	Mount Holyoke <i>alumnae</i> are	Mount Holyoke graduates

<p>“graduate” or “graduates” when appropriate.</p> <p>Note: alum refers to anyone who has attended Mount Holyoke for at least two semesters, but <i>does not</i> necessarily equate to someone who graduated.</p>	<p>leading the way</p>	<p>are leading the way</p>
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Those who attended the College 10 years ago or fewer are *recent alums*, not *young alums*.

[The Alum Association website](#) posts up-to-date statistics about alums.

Academic terms

Class and year

Always identify a current student or an alum’s class year on first mention. Referring to a student’s class year rather than anticipated graduation year makes the writing more timeless. *Alison Jones ’19* versus *Alison Jones, sophomore*

After identifying on the first mention, there’s no need to repeat the class year throughout the article.

Do not include two years, as students occasionally do. That is, do not use Jane Smith ’17/’18. Use whichever year is in the student directory. In doubt, ask the Registrar.

Terms designating academic years are lowercase: first-year students (never freshman), sophomore, junior, senior. Always include “student” when referring to first-year students. Only use “firsties” or “first-years” in casual references.

Add the century as needed.

Elizabeth Holloway Marston, class of 1915.

class of ...

Don’t capitalize in running text

Identify alums by their preferred class year, which is sometimes different from their actual graduation year. This information is available in the Colleague database or in the [Alum Directory](#). There is no such thing as a recent alum finishing up final credits; a student does not graduate until all requirements are complete.

Students finishing a degree in December have their degree conferred the following March and will be considered the class of that May, even if they have walked or processed in a previous Commencement ceremony.

Jane Smith '17 finished her degree in December 2016.

Students finishing a degree in late summer have their degree conferred that October and will be considered the class of the previous May, regardless of the past or future May Commencement ceremony in which they participate.

Jane Smith '16 finished her degree in August 2016.

Graduation years do not have a comma:

Bachelor's degree: Jane Smith '17

Frances Perkins scholars: Jane Smith FP'17 (please note: when referring to a Frances Perkins scholar online, please hyperlink the FP to this page:

<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/admission/apply-undergraduate-first-year/application-process/frances-perkins-scholars>)

Master of Arts degree recipient: June Smith MA'17

Master of Science degree recipient: June Smith MS'17

Master of Arts in Teaching degree recipients: June Smith MAT'17

Note: Master of Arts in Teaching degrees are referred to as MAT regardless of the subject area (e.g., mathematics teaching or teacher leadership).

Parent or guardian of student: Janice Smith P'17

Certificate recipient: Judy Smith CG'17

Note: Currently, a certificate is issued to undergraduate foreign-exchange students and post-baccalaureate students. It does not convey an actual credential or certification.

Multiple degrees

List the degrees in the order in which they were received. *Elizabeth Jones '17, MAT'18.*

Honorary degree recipient: June Smith HD'24

Courses and majors

Capitalize course titles. Use the full name.

She took Black Migrations. The professor was teaching Chemistry 223: Analytical Chemistry.

Do not capitalize majors, programs, specializations or concentrations of study when they are not part of an official department name or title. Exception: proper nouns.

She received a bachelor's degree in chemistry.

He is a French major.

She majored in Romance languages.

College

Capitalize “College” and “Collegewide” when referring specifically to Mount Holyoke. Mount Holyoke has a commitment to a Collegewide environment of inclusion. See the Mount Holyoke College entry.

Capitalize a common noun when it is part of the name: Hampshire College
But do not capitalize when the common noun is separated from its proper name: *Mount Holyoke, Smith and Wellesley colleges*

Departments and offices

Capitalize the formal names of departments, divisions and offices. Lowercase when using informal descriptions. Proper nouns are always capitalized. See [Courses and majors](#).
Office of Admission; admission office
Department of Music; music department
Department of English; English department
The program is sponsored by the Department of Astronomy. I am majoring in Asian studies.
But, the departments of Music, Art History and Physics.

Degrees

Avoid listing degrees. If they must be included, spell them out rather than using their abbreviations.

John Smith, who has a doctorate in chemistry, spoke on campus Thursday.

In running text, spell out and don’t capitalize.
bachelor’s degree, master’s degree, doctorate

Some professors who have trained outside of the United States list an Lic., or licentiate degree. This is essentially the equivalent of a master’s degree and can translate to licenciatura (Spanish), licentiate (Belgian), licentiaat (Dutch), or licencié (French). Consult [Wikipedia](#) for more information.

When abbreviating degrees, use periods.
B.A., M.S., Ph.D., B.F.A., Lic.
MBA and MD are exceptions (no periods).

Informally, lowercase the degree and add an apostrophe.
bachelor’s degree, master’s degree, doctoral degree

When formally referring to a degree, capitalize and do not use an apostrophe.
Bachelor of Arts, Master of Science
She holds a Master of Science from Rutgers University.

Emeritus, emeriti

Mount Holyoke refers to a so-honored retired faculty member as emeritus and emeriti for more than one, regardless of gender. Individual faculty may choose how they wish to be identified, however, such as emerita. Note that emeritus status is not given automatically to retired professors.

Endowed chairs

An endowed chair is a funded position in a specific department.

Valerie Barr '77 is the Jean E. Sammet Professor of Computer Science. She has been appointed to the Jean E. Sammet Chair in Computer Science.

Latin honors

Lowercase and roman font: cum laude, magna cum laude, summa cum laude, honoris causa

Theater

Use theater unless the proper name is spelled Theatre.

She is the chair of the Department of Theatre Arts. The performance is at the Rooke Theatre.

The class was called Introduction to Theatre Arts.

I teach in the theater arts department. She is majoring in theater. The theater is open.

Buildings and locations

The proper names of buildings should be capitalized.

Art Building, Porter Hall, Williston Memorial Library, Mary Lyon Hall

Lowercase terms such as the north wing, new residence hall and library.

Use helpful descriptors where possible. Spell out the full name on first reference.

Pratt Music Hall, Willits-Hallowell Conference Center

In general, use the donor or honoree's last name, but not their first.

Groves Health Center

Some buildings are known by both names, such as Mary Woolley Hall and Mary Lyon Hall.

Refer to cultural centers as centers. Avoid calling them houses.

Building names

Names and locations of campus buildings and most offices are available on the online [campus map](#).

1 Woodbridge Street

5 Faculty Lane

8 Park Street

25 Morgan Street
1837 Hall

Abbey Memorial Chapel. The Mary Deacon Bullard Garden is just outside. Note that it is not part of Mary Lyon Hall. It is adjacent to it. The original Mary Lyon Hall included a small chapel that was renovated, expanded and renamed in 1938.

Abbey Hall

Abbey-Buckland Multipurpose Room

Abbey Interfaith Sanctuary

Art Building

Asian Center for Empowerment (ACE) cultural center (not house)

Banteah Cultural Center

Betty Shabazz Cultural Center, Shabazz Cultural Center (not house)

Blanchard Art Gallery

Blanchard Hall. Refers to the historic building only — the Great Room is separate. Both are part of the Community Center. Do not use SuperBlanch. Blanchard is made up of the following:

Ground floor: Cochary Pub & Kitchen, Grab 'n Go.

Second floor: Art Gallery, Unity Center, Rotunda Room (Blanchard 226).

Third floor: Weissman Student Commons.

Brigham Hall

Buckland Hall

Campus Police is no longer in use. See Public Safety and Service

Canoe House

Carr Laboratory

Cassani Seminar Room, Cassani Room (in Shattuck)

Central Heating Plant

Central Services Complex, Central Services

Chapin Auditorium (in Mary Woolley)

Ciruti Language Center, Ciruti Center

Clapp Laboratory

Cleveland Hall

Cochary Pub & Kitchen

College Archives and Special Collections, College Archives

Community Boathouse

Community Center. The Community Center refers to the entire complex and includes three distinct areas: Blanchard Hall, the Dining Commons and the Great Room. See Dining Commons.

Community Center bus stop. Formerly known as the Blanchard bus stop.

Creighton Hall

Dickinson House

Dining Commons. A part of the Community Center. Do not use “D.C.” or “the Commons.”

Opened in January 2018. See Community Center.

Dining Services

Dwight Hall

Eliana Ortega Cultural Center, Ortega Cultural Center (not House)

Eliot House

Eliot House lounge

Equestrian Center

Field Gate (not Gates). Full name: Fidelia Nash Field Gate. But “the College gates” is acceptable.

Five College Consortium

Five College Women’s Studies Research Center, Women's Studies Center

Gamble Auditorium, located in the Art Building, not the Art Museum Building

Richard Glenn Gettell Amphitheater (not Amphitheatre), Gettell Amphitheater

Golden Pears, residence hall kitchens

Gorse Children’s Center

Grab ’n Go

Graduate programs, preferred over PaGE

Great Room. Located in the Community Center (not Blanchard)

Groves Health Center

Ham Hall

Ham-MacGregor Dining Hall

Harriet Newhall Center, where the Office of Admission is located

Hooker Auditorium (in Clapp Laboratory)

Info Commons in Williston Memorial Library

Intergroup Dialogue Center, IGD Center, the center

Jeannette Marks Cultural Center, Marks House

Jenkins Room, Newhall Center Admission Office. Not auditorium.

Jones Career Development Center, Jones Career Center

Joseph Allen Skinner Museum, the Skinner Museum

Kendade Hall and the Marion Craig Potter ’49 Atrium

Kendall Sports & Dance Complex, Kendall Complex. Note the ampersand, which is how the name appears outside the building. In the Complex is:

Kendall Hall, the Mount Holyoke Fitness Center, the Mildred S. Howard

Gymnasium, the Mount Holyoke Natatorium, the Mount Holyoke Field House and

the Mount Holyoke Dance Studios. It is surrounded on the outside by the Mount Holyoke Turf & Track Complex, the Mount Holyoke Soccer Field, the Mount Holyoke Activity Field and the Mount Holyoke Tennis Courts.

Kohler Building Facilities Management, Facilities Management

Language and Cultural Commons

Lower Lake, Upper Lake

MacGregor Hall (not McGregor)

The Mandelles, the 'Delles (informal)

Mandelle Hall North, Mandelle North

Mandelle Hall South, Mandelle South

Marion Craig Potter '49 Atrium in Kendade Hall

Mary Deacon Bullard Garden, Bullard Garden

Mary Lyon Hall. See also Abbey Memorial Chapel

Mary Woolley Hall (no middle initial E. even though that's the formal name of the building)

Mary Woolley Circle

McCulloch Auditorium (in Pratt)

McCulloch Center for Global Initiatives, McCulloch Center, the Center

Mead Hall

Merrill House

Miller Worley Center for the Environment, Miller Worley Center, the Center

Mount Holyoke College, Mount Holyoke, MHC, the College

Use the full formal name on first mention. Never use Holyoke or Mt. Holyoke. Exception:

The College's internal website is my.mtholyoke.

Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, the Art Museum, MHCAM

Do not use "museum" without "art." See Joseph Allen Skinner Museum.

Mount Holyoke College Botanic Garden, the Botanic Garden

Note: garden is singular. Encompasses the Talcott Greenhouse, the arboretum and numerous gardens. The entire campus is not a botanic garden.

Mount Holyoke Community Boathouse, the Community Boathouse

New York Room (in Mary Woolley Hall)

Newhall Center Admission Office, Admission Office

The Orchards Golf Club

The Orchards Golf Club is Mount Holyoke's 18-hole championship golf course. A shrine to the game and to its creator, The Orchards remains a hidden gem for club members and their guests. It was crafted in 1922 from 160 acres of sloping wooded terrain by the legendary Donald Ross and is now famous across the Northeast for its course design. The facility has hosted the 2004 U.S. Women's Open and the 2002 NCAA Women's Division III National Championships.

Pearsons Annex
Pearsons Hall
Pageant Green
Porter Hall
Pratt Music Hall. Includes McCulloch Auditorium and Warbeke
President's House
Prospect Hall
Public Safety and Service, Public Safety. Former name of Campus Police.

The head of Public Safety now has the title of director. Do not use the acronym. [Read for more information.](#)

Reese Psychology & Education Building, Reese Building
Rockefeller Hall North, Rockefeller North, Rocky North, the Rockies
Rockefeller Hall South, Rockefeller South, Rocky South, the Rockies
Rooke Theatre

Safford Hall
Shattuck Hall
Skinner Hall
Skinner Green
Skinner Museum - see Joseph Allen Skinner Museum
Stimson Room (in Williston Memorial Library)
Student Financial Services

Talcott Greenhouse (not "Arboretum"); The Mount Holyoke College Botanic Garden (singular) encompasses the Talcott Greenhouse, the arboretum and numerous gardens.
Beverly Daniel Tatum Unity Center (in Blanchard Hall), Unity Center
Torrey Hall

Upper Lake, Lower Lake

Wa-Shin-An, the Japanese meditation garden and teahouse located on the top floor of Eliot House. Translates as "Peace-Mind House."
Weissman Center for Leadership, Weissman Center, the Center
Weissman Student Commons, located on the third floor of Blanchard Hall, opened in late 2017.
Takes a singular verb tense.
Wilder Hall
Willits-Hallowell Conference Center
Williston Observatory
Williston Memorial Library, the library. The open space outside of the circulation desk is referred to as the atrium, not the courtyard. The sculpture is by Dale Chihuly and is titled "Clear and Gold Tower."

From Archives: The College persuaded Andrew Carnegie to give \$50,000 for a new library in spring 1904, with the condition that Mount Holyoke would raise an additional \$50,000 by that June. The Carnegie Foundation gave a gift in the 1930s that provided \$5,000 a year for five years for new books (7,400 total new books were purchased with those funds). Some time between 1901 and 1937 the Carnegie Foundation also gave a gift of \$150,000 toward the endowment of library staff salaries. The library is one of about a half dozen in the world whose collection includes volumes that are organized by the Cutter system. [This blog post has more information about the library.](#)

College traditions, characters and events

Baccalaureate

the ceremony the night before Commencement to commemorate the graduating class. The event includes music and speeches from students and faculty.

Berries and Bubbly (no ampersand)

The original event is sponsored by the Alum Association and the Office of Development and welcomes members of the senior class as Mount Holyoke's newest alums. Occurs on the last day of classes in each semester. It was formerly known as Strawberries and Champagne. Berries and Bubbly is now offered at other times of the year to mark other occasions.

Big/Little Program

This tradition, formerly known as Big Sister/Little Sister and Big Sibling/Little Sibling, builds community and connections between classes. The junior class serves as the Bigs to the first-year students' Littles. The program began in the early 1900s.

Blessing and Sending

Occurs the Friday before Commencement and hosted by Community and Belonging, this event includes an exchange of roses in a ceremony that is spiritual more than religious. Seniors, accompanied by family and friends, are given a blessing and a send-off as they commence their new lives.

Blu

President Holley's beloved dog is named "Blu," without an "e" at the end. He/him.

Building On Our Momentum (BOOM!) Community Day, BOOM!

BOOM! is a learning conference that has been held annually since March 2017.

Chef Jeff cookies

created by Jeff Sadowski, who worked for dining services in the early 2000s.

Class colors and mascots or symbols

green griffin, red pegasus, yellow sphinx, blue lion, purple phoenix (Frances Perkins scholars) and teal owl (Professional and Graduate Education, or PaGE)

Not capitalized. Plural forms: pegasi, sphinxes, phoenixes. The [MHC class color chart](#) lists class years with their colors.

Mount Holyoke classes had been voting on a variety of class colors since the late 1800s, but it wasn't until 1901 that the classes voted for the colors that are still in use today. The animal symbols were finalized nearly a decade later. Today class colors and symbols decorate everything from key holders and library banners to window decals and sweatshirts. Each class proudly displays its class color at class-related activities such as Convocation, and it is an integral part of student identity.

Commencement

Commencement ceremony; Commencement weekend. Commencement is capped when it refers to the actual event. *I'm going to Commencement.* Lowercase when used as an adjective or when referring to its general existence. *My commencement featured Dolores Huerta as a speaker.*

Common Read

not Reading

a topical book read by incoming first-year students and the College community

Convocation

the all-College ceremony in early September signifying the beginning of the academic year

Crafting a Life in the Arts

department at-homes

receptions typically held the day before Commencement for majors who are about to graduate and their families

“Dirty Dancing”

The 1987 movie that is traditionally shown during Orientation because of the line “[Baby's starting Mount Holyoke in the fall.](#)” (Note: She is not “going to Mount Holyoke in the fall.”) The real name of Baby, the lead female character, is Frances, named after one of the College's most notable alums, Frances Perkins, class of 1902, the first female to serve in the Cabinet, as U.S. Secretary of Labor.

DisOrientation

This ever-evolving tradition builds camaraderie between the senior and first-year classes.

Elfing

During the fall semester, sophomores become “Elves,” leaving notes of encouragement for first-year students over the course of a week. A similar time frame is held for spring admits, who are “Bunnied” by the first-year class board during the spring semester.

Faculty Show

Occurs every four years. Faculty and staff put on a variety show that pokes fun at popular culture, campus traditions and the faculty themselves. Began in 1903.

Family and Friends Weekend

A mid-fall event designed to offer families and friends to get a taste of the academic and social life of the College. The weekend features two and a half days of events planned by a committee of students and administrators in cooperation with the Office of Student Programs. Events include academic highlights, musical performances, and athletic and cultural events.

Flower Show

Hosted by the Botanic Garden, this event occurs during the first two weeks in March.

Founder’s Day

Celebrates the founding of Mount Holyoke Female Seminary by Mary Lyon, and is held on November 8, the date the seminary opened in 1837. Ice cream became a featured treat in the 1920s.

Golden Pear

A community kitchen in a residence hall. Golden Pears include full kitchen facilities, utensils and a dining room table that seats six to eight and are used to prepare special meals. They are so named because of wallpaper that used to be in a residence hall kitchen.

Honor Code Ceremony

occurs at Orientation, when new students sign a pledge to follow the honor code.

Hortense Parker Celebration

This celebration for students and alums of color is named after the College’s first known African-American student and the first known student of color to graduate from Mount Holyoke. Two Native American non-graduates were here in the 1840s, two sisters whose father was Cherokee: Mary Harriet Boudinot, a non-graduate of the class of 1849, and Eleanor Susan Boudinot, a non-graduate of the class of 1846. The name is sometimes spelled Boudinott.

Inauguration

Irma Rabbino Award, in fond memory of Rose and Murray Rabbino. Not the Maurice Rabbino Award, per College Relations.

Junior Show, J-Show

A source of entertainment and general merriment on campus for more than a century. It features an original play that is typically heavy on humor and parody. Over the years, returning alums have been known to sing the songs from their show.

January Intersession, Intersession

Jean Sammet '48 Lecture

The Sammet Fund is shared by the computer science and math departments and they alternate hosting events.

Laurel Parade

LEAP Symposium

Stands for "Learning From Application" Symposium. The annual fall event showcasing students' summer internships and research.

M&Cs

No spaces. Originally milk and crackers, now known as milk and cookies. A light evening snack provided as a study break and social event. Held in residence halls Monday through Thursday and in the Dining Commons on Sunday.

Maria Scholarship Award, Maria scholarships

mini-reunion

A gathering of classmates (informal or formal) in the years between official, campus reunions. Not capped. See Reunion.

Mountain Day

First celebrated in spring 1838, a few months after Mount Holyoke was founded. One hundred peals of the single bell in Mary Lyon Hall announce the day. Many students climb or ride to the Summit House atop nearby Mount Holyoke — the College's namesake — which is just shy of 1,000 feet to eat ice cream and savor panoramic views of the Connecticut River Valley.

Move-in Day, Move-in

New-student Plants

The Botanic Garden's gift to every new student, a tradition since 1971. Originally known as "Firstie Plants" or "First-year Plants," this name was revised in 2019 to be more inclusive to all new students.

Orientation

Pangy Day

Short for Pangyneskeia, an invented Greek word that roughly means “whole-woman making” and pronounced “[pawN goon ah SKAY ah](#).” Debuted as a College tradition in 1979. Part Earth Day and part May Day, it features an all-College picnic and festivities for the entire campus, including music, games, a ritual maypole and a spiral dance. Occurs on the last Friday of classes in the spring semester. Note: Pangyneskeia was suggested to Mary Lyon as a possible name for her new seminary, she did not consider it as a name.

Paws

The Lyons’ and the College’s mascot is Paws. Try not to use pronouns with Paws, but if you absolutely must, they/them.

Reunion, reunion

Reunion is capped when it refers to the actual event. Reunion Weekend. *I'm celebrating my fiftieth Reunion. Will you be attending Reunion this year?*

Lowercase when used as an adjective or when referring to the general existence of reunion. *At Mount Holyoke reunions are a great tradition. Do you generally attend Reunion? Do you generally attend your reunion?*

Use roman numerals to distinguish between reunion weekends. *Reunion I and Reunion II occurred at Reunion 2013.*

see also mini-reunion

Ring and Roses Ceremony

Held in the spring semester of sophomore year to acknowledge the halfway mark of a student’s Mount Holyoke College career. The class celebrates with a semi-formal dance, presentations and a dessert reception. To memorialize the event, each sophomore present receives a rose. Sophomores who ordered class rings also receive them this night.

Senior Symposium

occurs in April

Sophomore Institute

Not a program. No article in the name — not “the Sophomore Institute.” Occurs in February.

spring break (lowercase)

Snow Ball

A relatively new tradition. The first-year class board partners with the Orientation team in January to host a semi-formal dance for all members of the first-year class, including spring admits, through music, dancing and a night of fun and socializing.

The Mount Holyoke Fund

Vespers

Held in some form on campus each December since 1899, this holiday tradition is much anticipated and reliably fills Abbey Memorial Chapel.

Welcome Ceremony for New Alums

The annual tradition when the fiftieth reunion class bestows a scarf in the senior class color on each graduating student during Commencement weekend. Avoid “scarving” if possible and do not use “scarfing.”

Department and program names

Capitalize the formal names of departments and programs. Lowercase when using informal descriptions. Proper nouns are always capitalized. A program is not a department.

Department of Art & Art History, Program in Africana Studies.

[Majors and minors](#) are not the equivalent of a department. When departments have two names, do not use a single name.

Department of Sociology & Anthropology

Links to these offices and the names of the current chairs and department coordinators [can be found online](#). See also [Departments and offices](#).

Africana Studies (program)

Art & Art History

Asian Studies (program)

Astronomy

Biochemistry (program)

Biological Sciences

Chemistry

Classics and Italian

Computer Science

Critical Race and Political Economy

Dance

Economics

English

Environmental Studies

Film Media Theater

French

Gender Studies

Geology & Geography

German Studies

History

International Relations

Jewish Studies (program)

Mathematics and Statistics

Music
Neuroscience and Behavior (program)
Philosophy
Physical Education and Athletics
Physics
Politics
Psychology and Education
Religion
Romance Languages and Literatures (program)
Russian/Russian and Eurasian Studies
Sociology & Anthropology
Spanish, Latina/o, and Latin American Studies

Professional and Graduate Education, PaGE, graduate programs.
Note that PaGE is not a department or a program, it's a division.

Miscellaneous College terms and references

700+ campus acres

Total land holdings are 725.4 acres. The “800 acres” description is no longer accurate, as it reflects past total land holdings.

All gender: our graduate program is open to all genders. It is not a co-ed program. “All gender” acknowledges the gender spectrum.

Disability Services. Was formerly AccessAbility Services; do not use AccessAbility Services going forward.

ALANA

Stands for African-American, Latine/x, Asian-American and Native-American students.

“Alma Mater”

The school song, but lowercase when an alums refer to the College.

I sing the “Alma Mater” at my alma mater.

Arts and Technology Initiative

Be Well at Mount Holyoke, Be Well initiative (lowercase)

Note that the wordmark uses BeWell.

Begun in 2016, this initiative was rolled out at the fall 2017 Orientation. It focuses on health in four general areas: healthy mind, healthy body, healthy life and health community. Be Well's

many efforts include launching the first wellness space on campus, MoAsis, a relaxation space based in health services.

Campus Living Laboratory, Campus Living Lab. Avoid the acronym, CLL.

The Campus Living Lab transforms the College's more than 700 acres of both natural and built landscape into an opportunity for multidisciplinary undergraduate research and teaching, from the lakes and trails and Botanic Garden to four miles of trails and an online database with decades of student and faculty monitoring stations sampling water, fire and other ecological field sites.

Campus Sustainability Task Force, the task force

Carol Hoffmann Collins Global Scholars-in-Residence

"Scholar" is not plural when referring to only one.

She was the 2015 Carol Hoffmann Collins Global Scholar-in-Residence.

Civil Rights & Community Standards

As of August 2025, a new branch within the Office of Student Life

C.J. Law

director of intercollegiate coaching and varsity hunter seat team coach. No space between the initials, per AP style, as well as C.J.'s.

Community-Based Learning

Dean of Faculty, not Dean of the Faculty

Department of Art and Art History

Architectural studies and art studio are majors within this department.

Dorm

Use residence hall. Avoid dorm or dormitory.

early decision

Avoid ED.

Emily Dickinson, class of 1849

The Amherst poet attended Mount Holyoke for one academic year, from 1847 to 1848. At that time the course of study at the Seminary was for three years total, divided into three classes: junior, middle and senior. Dickinson placed in the middle class, based on her entrance exams. If she had chosen to stay, she would have been a graduating member of the class of 1849. In the Archives she is categorized as a non-graduate of the class of 1849.

exhibit: what Archives and Special Collections presents

exhibition: what the Art Museum presents

Families: For general use alongside “parents.”

Parents and families cheered their students at Commencement.

Fellowships at Mount Holyoke, the fellowships program

Fimbel Maker & Innovation Lab, the Fimbel Lab

Always use Fimbel as part of the name. Avoid referring to this facility as a makerspace and if it's necessary to do so, lowercase.

Opening at the start of spring semester 2019, the \$3.5 million, 8,000-square-foot space is located in the former dining and lounge areas of Prospect Hall. Students, faculty, staff and alumni gather in the Fimbel Lab to create and invent. They can learn using a variety of technical equipment, including a laser cutter, a vacuum former, two 3D printers, sewing machines, soldering tools and computers. New equipment is added regularly. The previous makerspace, located in 211 Art Building, has been converted into a production studio. See Mount Holyoke College Makerspace.

fiscal year 2025-2026

Spell out in general communications. Avoid FY unless it's for internal communication. The College's fiscal year starts on July 1 so use both the current and next year. Fiscal year 2019-2020 starts July 1, 2019 and ends June 30, 2020.

First-gen Network

First-year Seminars Program; first-year seminar class

FLIP: First Generation and Low Income Partnership

Frances Perkins

One of the College's most notable alumni, Frances Perkins, class of 1902, was the first woman to serve in the Cabinet, as U.S. Secretary of Labor.

Frances Perkins Program, Frances Perkins Scholar, Frances Perkins scholars

This program is open to students 25 years and older who have experienced an interruption in their education. Use nontraditional-age students and traditional-age students. When referring to a Frances Perkins scholar online, please link “FP” to the web page describing the Frances Perkins scholars:

Jane Doe [FP'17](#)

The Gates. Capital “The”

The Gates is Mount Holyoke’s virtual common space for career, community and connection. The Gates simplifies the way alums, students, faculty and staff can connect, giving Mount Holyoke community members access to a suite of resources, including an alum career directory, industry and affinity groups, and a job board.

Hope of Haiti
not Hope for...

Jeannette Marks
English professor and partner to President Mary Woolley. Two n’s in Jeannette.

Laurel Fellowships. Mount Holyoke offers need-based Laurel Fellowships to support students whose own resources are not sufficient to cover the cost of study abroad. They are the only form of financial aid given by Mount Holyoke for study abroad.

LITS. Library, Information, and Technology Services

Living-Learning Community, Living-Learning Communities. Avoid the acronym, LLC.

The Lynk (cap “The”)
The Lynk initiative or experience on first reference. It is not a program. The Lynk connects each student’s academic work with practical applications of the liberal arts and sciences. It does this through rigorous coursework, advising, alum mentoring, professional development, and experiential learning on and off campus. Intentional reflection and assessment are essential parts of the process.

The Lynk Universal Application Funding (UAF) program provides funding for sophomores and juniors to pursue unpaid internship and research opportunities.
Lynk-UAF

The Lynk on the Road

Lyons. Only use for student-athletes. Do **not** refer to any teams as the “Lady Lyons.”

makerspace. Not a proper name. See Mount Holyoke Makerspace. See Fimbel Maker & Innovation Lab.

Marketing and Communications. Not “MarComm,” not “Communications and Marketing.” As of July 1, 2025, Marketing and Communications is its own division rather than being a part of College Relations.

MHC Semester in D.C.
This program does not take an article — that is, not “The MHC Semester in D.C.”

Program is not part of the official title. In conjunction with the University of California Washington Center (UCDC)

MoAsis

A relaxation space at health services. See Be Well.

MoHo — avoid completely

MoHome

MoZone Peer Education Program, Mozone

Mount Holyoke College, Mount Holyoke, MHC, the College

Use the full formal name on first mention. Never use Holyoke or Mt. Holyoke.

Exception: The College's internal website is my.mtholyoke

Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, the Art Museum, MHCAM

Always include Mount Holyoke College on first reference.

Mount Holyoke College Board of Trustees, the Board, the trustees

Seven trustees, all members of the Board of Trustees, voted on Thursday.

Mount Holyoke College Botanic Garden, the Botanic Garden

The Botanic Garden encompasses the Talcott Greenhouse, the arboretum and numerous gardens. The entire College campus is no longer a botanic garden.

The Mount Holyoke Fund

cap "The"

Mount Holyoke College Makerspace

The Makerspace, located in 211 Art Building, closed as a makerspace in January 2019. The space will be converted into a production studio. In general, use makerspace as a common noun; do not cap unless referring to this former facility. See the Fimbel Maker & Innovation Lab.

Mount Holyoke College Shakti Program, the MHC Shakti Program

Not, Shakti or the Shakti program.

Mount Holyoke College Science Center, the Science Center

Mt. Holyoke

Located in Skinner State Park, this peak is sometimes called Skinner, but the correct name is Mt. Holyoke. According to Google it is a traprock mountain, with an elevation of 935 feet, and is

the western-most peak of the Holyoke Range. Note: Mount Holyoke College is located several miles away from Skinner State Park, not inside the park, as some websites claim.

Nancie L. Fimbel '68

Nexus, the Nexus concentration. Explain on first use: Nexus: Curriculum to Career, provides a way for students to gain interdisciplinary expertise in a variety of subject areas.

Nexus is not a minor, program or initiative.

Office of Student Involvement

The name changed from the Office of Student Programs as of August 1, 2019.

ombudsperson, ombuds

OneCard

Parents and families.

Please use this phrase instead of just “parents” when speaking generally.

Parents and families came to Chapin Auditorium after helping their students set up their residence hall rooms.

Professional and Graduate Education, PaGE, graduate programs

Posse Scholar, Posse scholars

Since 2010, Mount Holyoke has partnered with the Posse Foundation, a national organization that identifies and recruits diverse students with academic and leadership potential who risk being overlooked. Typically the students are admitted in groups — or posses — of about 10 students to one of the foundation’s 53 partner institutions across the country. It’s important to note that Mount Holyoke provides a full-tuition scholarship to each Posse student.

regular decision

Seven Sisters

The term for a collection of seven elite liberal arts colleges for women that were so named because of their relative affiliations with the once all-male Ivy League. Today they are sometimes called the Seven Siblings. These are Mount Holyoke, Smith, Wellesley, Barnard, Bryn Mawr (all still women’s colleges), Vassar (now an all-gender college) and Radcliffe, which as a part of Harvard is no longer a college. Do not use the terms “traditional women’s college” or “historical women’s college.” Avoid Seven Siblings unless referring to a specific organization.

Student Safety Net Fund. Do not use Emergency Student Relief Fund.

Tianhui Ng, Tian

Uncommon Women. Can be capped when in reference to MHC students and alums.
“Uncommon Women,” the play by Wendy Wasserstein ’71, is capped and in quotes.

V8s

VariAsians
annual Asian cultural festival

Vice President for ...
not Vice President of ...

Abbreviations

“Abbreviations” is both a specific term and an umbrella term for initialisms, acronyms and contractions. The Chicago Manual of Style, [chapter 10.2](#), and the Associated Press section on [abbreviations and acronyms](#) have fuller explanations of these terms. While exceptions can always be found — initialisms are not typically spelled out on first mention, but the United States is; “IMAX” and “JPEG” are acronym-initialism combinations — the following rules are generally applicable. In general, avoid them.

Abbreviations, the first letter or letters in a word or series of words. Do not use.

prof.
pres.
vol.

Contractions are abbreviations that include the first and last letters of a single word. Avoid.

Mr. (See [Courtesy titles](#).)
amt.

Sometimes a **symbol** stands for a term. Avoid.

@
=
+

Do not use an abbreviation to avoid repetition of an organization’s full name. Only use an abbreviation if the general reader will easily recognize it in subsequent references. Always spell out abbreviations on first mention.

National Institutes of Health, NIH
National Public Radio, NPR

Do not follow the full name of an organization with its abbreviation or acronym in parentheses. Use a recognizable shortened version of the name.

Fimbel Maker & Innovation Lab, the Fimbel Lab (not, MIL)

Miller Worley Center for the Environment, the Center (not, MWCE)

Acronyms are nouns formed by the initial letters of various words and read as a single word. laser, scuba, NASA, NATO

These are not usually preceded by an article. Generally, omit periods unless the result spells out an unrelated word.

Initialisms are nouns made up by a series of initials and each letter is pronounced. Most take an article — a, an, the — but not all, and not all the time. Use periods in most two-letter abbreviations. See the [AP Stylebook](#) for specific questions.

U.S., U.N., U.K., B.A.

Omit periods in initialisms that are pronounced.

LGBTQ, AOL, DNA, TLC, KFC, NBC

Common initialisms do not need to be spelled out on first use.

Alphabetization

For lists of foundations, funds, awards and individual names:

- alphabetize an organization under the first significant word
 - This includes a fund, an award or a foundation
 - Disregard “the” in front of the name
 - The Merry Gregg Foundation goes under M
 - Sally Montgomery Individual Prize in Community-Based Learning goes under S
- alphabetical by letter (not by word), ignoring spaces and punctuation
 - Acronyms are alphabetized by their letters, not how they are spelled out
 - The MLA Writing Grant goes under MLA, not Modern Languages Association
- alphabetize an individual donor by surname
 - Merry Gregg goes under G
 - In the case of two surnames (hyphenated or not), alphabetize by the first surname
 - Harriet Beecher Stowe is filed under Beecher, not Stowe
 - See the Associated Press Style Guide for information on Spanish names.
- years are ordered numerically, from earlier to later
 - Class of 1950 Award precedes Class of 2000 Award.
- numerals go at the top of the list, ascending in value.

- The 1905 Fellowship precedes the Alum Fellowship. (“The” is dropped, alphabetically.)
- these rules are followed even when the list is a mix of different types of names (but it’s preferable to have list categories separately):
 - Merry Gregg
 - Jonathan N. Lipman Award in East Asian Studies
 - Merry Gregg Foundation
 - Sally Montgomery Individual Prize in Community-Based Learning
- For readability, list foundations, funds, organizations, awards and scholarships in separate sections, where possible.

Geography and locations

Lowercase compass directions.

Travel north five miles.

The wind came in from the south.

Region names are capitalized when they stand alone and are widely understood to designate a specific geographic area, people or political entity.

the Northeast, the West Coast, the Midwest, Eastern Europe, the Middle East

High temperatures will prevail in the West.

He is a Northerner.

Spell out the names of the 50 states in running text, whether standing alone or in conjunction with a city, town, village or military base.

Fires burned in California. She grew up in Newton, Massachusetts.

Place a comma between the city and the state name, and another comma after the state name, unless ending a sentence.

She was driving from Fort Lee, New Jersey, to South Hadley, Massachusetts.

These are the AP state abbreviations, which are used outside of running text (ZIP code abbreviations in parentheses):

Ala. (AL)	Ill. (IL)	Miss. (MS)
Ariz. (AZ)	Ind. (IN)	Mo. (MO)
Ark. (AR)	Kan. (KS)	Mont. (MT)
Calif. (CA)	Ky. (KY)	Neb. (NE)
Colo. (CO)	La. (LA)	Nev. (NV)
Conn. (CT)	Md. (MD)	N.H. (NH)
Del. (DE)	Mass. (MA)	N.J. (NJ)
Fla. (FL)	Mich. (MI)	N.M. (NM)
Ga. (GA)	Minn. (MN)	N.Y. (NY)

N.C. (NC)	R.I. (RI)	Va. (VA)
N.D. (ND)	S.C. (SC)	Wash. (WA)
Okla. (OK)	S.D. (SD)	W.Va. (WV)
Ore. (OR)	Tenn. (TN)	Wis. (WI)
Pa. (PA)	Vt. (VT)	Wyo (WY)

*The names of eight states are never abbreviated (with ZIP code abbreviations): Alaska (AK), Hawaii (HI), Idaho (ID), Iowa (IA), Maine (ME), Ohio (OH), Texas (TX) and Utah (UT).

In the age of the internet and readers from around the world, include the state or country name of a major city.

Los Angeles, Calif. Boston, Mass. London, England. Paris, France.

In mailing addresses, use postal codes. Only abbreviate Ave., Blvd., and St. when referring to a numbered address. All other similar words, such as road, terrace, drive, etc., are always spelled out.

The area known as western Massachusetts is not capitalized. Do not use western Mass.

The Connecticut River Valley of western Massachusetts, the valley, the river.

Only use “Pioneer Valley” if it’s in the formal name of an organization, such as “Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School.”

Washington, D.C.

From the AP style guide: In AP usage, it’s Washington, D.C., within a sentence or headline, setting off D.C. with commas.

She worked for the Stimson Center in Washington, D.C., and as a Peace Corps volunteer.

Washington often stands alone within an AP story if it’s obviously the national capital rather than the state of Washington. Also acceptable is to use District of Columbia on first reference and the District subsequently. Do not use D.C. only except in quotations.

University of Massachusetts Amherst.

UMass Amherst on second reference.

U.S. or United States

Use “United States” on first reference. Thereafter, use “U.S.” (do not use “U.S.A.” or “America”).

Names and titles

Company and organization names

Check the company website and follow their lead. Use Co. or Cos. or Inc. or Ltd. if it appears that way in the formal title of the organization. Do not include a comma even if the company does. Do not capitalize unless the letters are individually pronounced.

BMW but USA Today

Do not use symbols such as exclamation points that might confuse the reader.

Toys R Us, not Toys “R” Us

Yahoo not Yahoo!

Include “The” if it’s part of the company name.

He worked at The Walt Disney Co.

When referring to a company without its formal title, use the term “company,” not “co.”

Where a company name is spelled with an initial lowercase letter, capitalize the letter at the beginning of a sentence.

IDesign Studio always has a waitlist.

Conferences, lectures, symposia and seminars

Conference and program titles are capitalized.

Trailblazers of Color Leadership Conference

Crafting a Life in the Arts

Individual lecture titles within a series should be set in quotes.

Abby Wambach opened the 2016-2017 Imagination series with her talk, “Beyond the Win: Leadership for Life.”

Courtesy titles

Do not use Mr., Mrs. or Ms. Use Dr. in first reference only as a formal title before the name of a physician, veterinarian or dentist — not a professor or faculty member.

In general, only capitalize formal titles used directly before an individual's name. Lowercase and spell out titles when they are not used with an individual's name.

We met President Obama.

The president will speak at the dinner.

Do not capitalize an occupational designation, only a true title.

Our speaker will be artist Alison Jones.

Separate a long title from a name with commas.

Jane Smith, the dean of students, published a book.

The dean of students, Jane Smith, wrote a book.

Mention credentials to indicate someone's professional training only where relevant.

Alison Jones, chemistry professor, was awarded the Lifetime Mentor Award by the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Jones was honored for her efforts to increase the number of women, and especially people of color, in the field of chemistry.

See also [Academic and Professional Titles](#).

Personal names

Use first and last names on first mention and only the last name on subsequent references. If someone is an alum, always use their class year on first reference.

Use middle names only when the person is publicly known that way, or to prevent confusion.

James Earl Jones

Use middle initials according to a person's preference and to prevent confusion.

George W. Bush but not Mickey C. Mantle

Students: In general, use the first and last name they request, in accordance with [Mount Holyoke's Chosen Name Policy](#). Be sure to check the student's class year via the [College directory](#). With the Commencement program only, the Registrar's office provides a list of the correct names of graduating students. For students who are not graduating, check to see how they want their names displayed in the Commencement program.

Please note: It is best practice to check in with students as to what names and pronouns they'd like to use for publications that will go to external audiences (i.e., a story on the College's public website, a print publication distributed off-campus, etc.). Not every student situation is the same and being explicit in this regard is best.

Professors: Use the first and last names that appear on their department profile. If they are alums, always use their class year.

Staff: Use the first and last names that appear on their office or department page. If they don't appear on the website, use their name as it appears in the directory. If they are alums, always use their class year.

Alums: Use the names that they request if it is an interview or profile. If an alum uses a different name than the one they used when they were on campus, ask if we can put their undergrad

name in parentheses in the first mention, with the caveat that it's perfectly fine if the alum doesn't want their undergrad name mentioned at all. This includes birth surnames as well as [deadnames](#). You can look up their class year in the [Alum Directory](#).

The typical format is: current first name, (nickname if applicable) undergrad name if applicable, current last name and class year.

Alexandra (Lexi) Armstrong Jones '95

Nicknames: When it's appropriate to include a nickname, put it in parentheses.

James (Jim) Earl Jones

Visitors: Use the name as it appears on their personal website, book jacket, etc. Otherwise, use the name they request. If they are alums, always use their class year.

Titles of works

Capitalize the principal words, including prepositions and conjunctions of four or more letters.

Use quotations for albums, books, computer games, movies, opera, plays, poems, radio and TV programs, song titles, podcasts and works of art. Episodes, such as those in a TV show or podcast, also take quotations.

Use quotations for art exhibitions and archives exhibits. Note: These terms are specific to the presenting field. The Art Museum puts on exhibitions, and Archives puts on exhibits.

“Piece Together: The Quilts of Mary Lee Bendolph,” is on display at the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum and features 18 quilts.

“Laurel Parade” is an exhibition curated by Samantha Snodgrass '18, who is interning in the College archives.

The Bible, Quran and other holy books, along with reference books, such as almanacs, dictionaries and encyclopedias, do not take quotation marks.

Software and most websites and apps do not take quotation marks.

The titles of magazines and newspapers do not take quotation marks or italics.

Do not capitalize “magazine” or “the” unless these words are part of the publication's title.

Time magazine

ESPN The Magazine

The Boston Globe

When listing several publications or periodicals, lowercase the initial “the” and eliminate additional references of “the” from the list.

We read the New York Times, Boston Globe and Washington Post every morning.

Dates and times

Dates

When a month is used with a specific date, abbreviate only: Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec.

January 1972 was cold.

Jan. 5 was the coldest day of the year.

When using a month and a year only, do not separate with commas.

January 2010

When a phrase is used with a month, date and year, set both the date and year off with commas.

Jan. 2, 1979, was the coldest day in the decade.

Use commas around a phrase with a day, date and time.

The concert was held Tuesday, Jan. 24, at 7 pm

When referencing a span of years, use an en dash and all four numbers of the second year, even if the span is within the same decade: 1980–1987.

See also [Dashes and hyphens](#).

It's not necessary to use the word "on" before a date or day of the week when its absence would not lead to confusion.

The meeting will be held Monday.

When writing dates or inclusive dates, you may use an en dash instead of "to" or "through" but only if the word "from" or "between" doesn't precede the range.

The box office is open Monday-Friday.

The performance will run Sept. 14–22.

The style of painting was popular from the 14th to 16th centuries.

The party was from 1 to 3 pm.

She was in college from 1998 to 2002.

She was put in charge between April and July.

Use an "s" without an apostrophe after the year to indicate spans of decades or centuries.

Decades may be written out or abbreviated. If abbreviating, use an apostrophe.

1950s and 1960s

'50s and '60s

Suzan-Lori Parks '85

With centuries, use figures for numbers 10 or higher.

the first century

The university was founded in the 1880s.

An apostrophe after the year is needed for possessives:

The presidential election was 1980's biggest news story. (or rework as “the biggest news story of 1980.”)

daylight saving time (lowercase, not plural, and no hyphen).

Seasons and semesters

Lowercase.

autumn, fall, winter, spring, summer

Time

Use figures for time of day, except for noon and midnight, and to express duration of times.

1 pm

5 o'clock

The play lasted 2 hours and 15 minutes.

Use noon and midnight instead of 12 pm or 12 am. Never write 12 noon or 12 midnight — this is redundant.

Lowercase without periods for online content (web pages, email): am, pm.

3:30 pm.

If it's on the hour, don't use minutes.

3 pm, not 3:00 pm

Note that you need both am and pm only when the range calls for it, and that en dashes are used instead of hyphens:

8:30–10 pm

noon–2 pm

9 am–3 pm

The day usually precedes the time, with hours preceded by a comma. No comma if order is reversed.

Monday through Friday, 8 am–8 pm EST.

We are available 8 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday.

The reading is on Wednesday, March 28, at 7 pm at the Odyssey Bookshop in South Hadley.

Use commas around a phrase with a day, date and time.

The concert was held Tuesday, Jan. 24, at 7 pm.

In print pieces, house style permits small caps with no periods and zeros after times on the hour.

10:30 AM—4:00 PM

10:30 AM—NOON

In digital pieces, house style does not permit small caps, and “am” and “pm” are without periods. with no periods and zeros after times on the hour.

10:30 am—4:00 pm

10:30 am—noon

Numerals

Spell out numbers from one through nine (standing alone or used as modifiers).

I'll be there in five minutes.

He scored with two seconds left.

An eight-hour day.

The two-minute warning.

Spell out numbers under 10 when referring to days, weeks, months, years.

The internship lasted six months.

Use figures for all numbers 10 and above — and use figures with a unit of measurement, ratios, percentages, page numbers, sums of money or when referring to ages of people, animals, events or things.

He ran 5 miles.

Her test grade was 8% higher than the last one.

We had 6 inches of snow.

The student-to-faculty ratio is 10 to 1.

She has a daughter, 2, and a son, 8.

She is in her 30s.

8 megabytes, 240 RAM

According to the chart on page 4, nearly half of the elementary-age children in Texas receive a \$5 weekly allowance.

Use figures for academic course numbers.

History 306

Spell out numbers that start a sentence. Rephrase if this is awkward.

Twenty-one students were in the class.

Exception: Use figures when a sentence begins with a year.

1945 saw the end of the war.

Fractions: Spell out amounts less than one, using hyphens between the words.

two-thirds, three-quarters, nine-tenths, seven-sixteenths

Ordinal numbers: For all online publications (such as the website or email), we spell out ordinal numbers.

Mount Holyoke College is celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the program.

This is the fifth consecutive year the College has been recognized by the HEED Award.

Money

Abbreviate with a dollar sign (\$) when used to describe an amount. Spell out only when discussing the type of currency itself. Don't use extra zeros with sums of money: *\$6 not \$6.00.*

Do not use "M" as a substitute for million in communications intended for the general reader. This is common vernacular among fundraisers but unfamiliar to the public.

Telephone numbers

Use hyphens, not parentheses or periods: *413-538-2000.*

Use lowercase x, with no space, for extensions: *413-538-2000 x2304*

Punctuation

Asterisks

In general, if an asterisk occurs with other punctuation (period, comma, etc.), place it after the punctuation. An exception is the dash — place the asterisk before the dash.

*Sample rates for a \$10,000 charitable gift annuity.**

Bulleted lists

Introduce a list of bulleted items by a colon. The items should be:

- Two or greater in number (don't use a list with just one or two bullets).
- Parallel in construction (all complete sentences or all sentence fragments, for example).
- Consistent in style and verb tense (such as all directives in present tense, or all questions in past tense).
- Introduced by efficient wording that avoids repetition in the bullets.
- Appropriately punctuated, whether complete sentences or sentence fragments:
 - Capitalize the first letter of each bullet.
 - End each bullet with a period (or exclamation or question marks, if appropriate).Do not use a semicolon or comma.

If an item just won't fit the style of the others in the list, write it as a complete sentence beneath the bulleted list.

Capitalization

As a rule, only proper nouns are capitalized. See [Academia and Mount Holyoke College terms](#) for exceptions.

In a headline, only the first letter and proper nouns are capitalized.

Colons and semicolons

Use a colon at the end of a sentence to introduce lists and after an introductory statement that uses the words “as follows” or “the following.”

They asked everyone: her sister, brother, cousin and mother.

They asked the following: her sister, brother, cousin and mother.

Uppercase the first letter after a colon if the first word is a proper noun or begins a complete sentence.

The flag was a mix of colors: red, green, blue and orange.

The flag was a mix of colors: It was red, green, blue and orange.

Avoid semicolons. But use a semicolon to divide the two parts of a compound sentence (two independent clauses) when the clauses are not connected by a conjunction.

We have received your report; a follow-up mailing is not needed.

A semicolon also connects two independent clauses that use a connecting word, such as “therefore” or “however.”

We have received your report; therefore, a follow-up mailing is unnecessary.

Commas

Following AP style, we do not use serial commas, aka the Oxford comma.

Use commas to separate elements in a series but do not include a comma before the conjunction.

She studied history, sociology and biology. She would read Lorde, Woolf or Eliot.

It's interesting to note that Oxford University Press, for whom the serial comma is named, does not recommend the practice. According to the [Chicago Manual of Style's April 2019 Q&A](#):

“The latest iteration of Oxford’s venerable style guide (New Hart’s Rules, 2nd ed., 2014; this guide, like Chicago’s, has its origins in the 1890s) supports its use but allows it to be omitted: ‘For a century it has been a part of Oxford University Press style to retain or impose this last comma consistently, to the extent that the convention has also come to be called the Oxford comma. . . . The general rule is that one style or the other should be used consistently. However, the last comma can serve to resolve ambiguity’ (p. 77).

Butcher's Copy-Editing, published by Cambridge University Press (4th ed., 2006), likewise treats serial commas as optional: 'A comma should be consistently omitted or included before the final "and" or "or" in lists of three or more items' (p. 156). In its own text, the guide by Cambridge omits serial commas; Oxford's retains them. So for British English, use serial commas or omit them, but do so consistently. And if you go without, make sure to add a comma wherever its absence might create ambiguity."

Do not use a comma before "Jr." or "Sr." after a person's name: *John Smith Jr.*

Use a comma at the beginning and end of an interruptive clause.

Sonya Stephens, president of Mount Holyoke College, spoke at the meeting.

Use a comma after an exclamation point or question mark that appears in a title:

All the band's releases — "A Hard Day's Night," "Help!," "Yellow Submarine" and "Magical Mystery Tour" — were popular.

Dashes and hyphens

Three types of lines in punctuation:

hyphens -

en dashes –

em dashes —

An em dash is created using shift-option-hyphen keys.

An en dash is created by using option-hyphen.

Hyphens are the shortest. The AP [revised its hyphen entry](#) in spring 2019, including this excerpt: "Use of the hyphen is far from standardized. It is optional in most cases ... the fewer hyphens the better; use them only when not using them causes confusion (loose-knit group, but tax code changes). Think of hyphens as an aid to readers' comprehension. If a hyphen makes the meaning clearer, use it. If it just adds clutter and distraction to the sentence, don't use it. ... try rephrasing."

The main rule about hyphen use is to avoid ambiguity. So, typically, they join together words to create a compound adjective.

free-standing platform, special-interest money, little-known song

But no hyphen is needed if the meaning is clear and if the modifier is commonly recognized as one phrase.

Adverb modifiers preceding nouns do not take a hyphen, as in *commonly used words*.

Use a hyphen after well-, as in *well-known singer*.

See below for prefixes.

En dashes are shorter than em dashes and longer than hyphens. They are used for combining open compounds. No spaces around en dashes.

Justin Bieber–style lyrics

En dashes are also used for ranges (of time, dollar amounts). No spaces around hyphens. See [Dates and times](#).

2008–2012

\$85–\$100 a month

January–March

1–3 pm

Em dashes are longer than hyphens and en dashes. They create an emphasis slightly stronger than commas. Single spaces are used before and after em dashes.

The dog — the one that lived in the corner house — got out of her yard.

The leaves were red — actually, more of a deep maroon.

I believed — before coming to Mount Holyoke and meeting Professor Jones — that I couldn't write.

Ellipses

Treat an ellipsis as a three-letter word, with three periods together and a space on either side. If the words preceding the ellipsis constitute a complete sentence, whether in the original or in the condensation, add a period at the end of the sentence, a space and then the ellipsis.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights ... life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. ... To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

Exclamation marks

Avoid excessive use of exclamation marks. Do not use them for emphasis. A good rule of thumb is one per page. Better to use none except in dialogue when someone is shouting, or in titles: *he His favorite album was "Help!"*.

Italics

AP does not use italics. Genus and species names are not exceptions:
Ursus americanus

See also [Titles](#).

Non-English words and phrases

Use quotation marks for non-English words in an English-language context. This is to prevent them being misunderstood or seen as a mistake. Quotation marks aren't automatically necessary for non-English words, however, if it's obvious in context.

Non-English phrases should be put in quotation marks when they are unfamiliar. If a definition follows, enclose it in parentheses or quotation marks.

“Le coeur a ses raisons que le raison ne connaît point” (The heart has reasons that reason does not know).

Commonplace phrases in non-English languages do not need to be in quotes.

Our money says e pluribus unum. Go forth and carpe diem!

See also **Latin honors** under [Academia and Mount Holyoke College terms](#).

Prefixes and suffixes

Generally, do not hyphenate except as noted in AP and Webster’s New World College Dictionary.

AP, as of spring 2019: Do not hyphenate double-e combinations with pre- and re-.
*preeclampsia, preelection, preeminent, preempt, preestablished, preexisting
reelect, reemerge, reemphasize, reemploy, reenact, reengage, reenlist, reenter, reequip*

Use a hyphen if the word that follows is capitalized.

The song was written by ex-Beatle Ringo Starr.

Retain the hyphen when forming nouns, adjectives and verbs that indicate occupation or status:

co-pilot, co-chairman, co-host

But: Check Webster’s New World College Dictionary.

coauthor, copilot

Do not hyphenate when using a prefix with a word that starts with a consonant.

prenatal, predate, pregame

In general, no hyphen is needed with sub-, post-, or non-.

subtotal, subcommittee, nonaligned, postdoctoral

See also [Commonly used words and phrases](#).

Possessives

Plural nouns ending in s, add an an apostrophe only:

the students’ grades

the buildings’ entrances

the labs’ sinks

Plural nouns not ending in s, add ’s.

men's clothing
the justice's verdict
Marx's theories

Singular common nouns ending in s, add 's. This is a change from previous editions.

the hostess's invitation, the hostess's seat
the witness's answer, the witness's story.

Singular proper names ending in s, use only an apostrophe.

Jones' music
Achilles' heel

For singular nouns not ending in s, add 's.

The school's playground.

This applies to words ending in x or z as well.

The fox's den.

Quotation marks

Use smart quotes, a.k.a. curly quotes. Make sure the quote curls the correct way: *class of '19*.

The period and the comma always go inside the quotation marks.

She told us "stay in school," which was good advice.

"That gender studies class," the student said, "was a life-changing experience."

The dash, the exclamation point and the question mark go inside the quotation marks when they apply to the quote only. When they apply to the whole sentence, they go outside the marks.

Sgt. Carter gave the following order: "Peel potatoes — then lights out!"

Gomer Pyle said, "Golly, Sergeant!" when he heard the news.

"That gender studies class," the student said, "was a life-changing experience!"

My favorite Beatles album is "Help!"

In running quotations, each new paragraph should begin with open quotation marks (no closing marks). Only the final paragraph should contain the closing quotation mark.

When including a quote or "highlighted" word inside another quotation, use single quotes (') instead of double (").

AP style does not require a space between single and double quotes.

De Quincey's essay is called "On the Knocking at the Gate in 'Macbeth.'"

In his charge to the committee, the chair said, "I have often told you, 'don't give up the ship.'

Thanks to your efforts, we've been able to reach our goal."

Quotation marks are used when needed to prevent misreading the word or letter as literally part of the grammatical sentence. Use your judgment. The Chicago Manual of Style says, “The more unlikely a word is to be known to your reader, the more appropriate the quotation marks. Likewise for terms that may be misunderstood if not set off from the rest of the sentence. There’s no rule that will fit every circumstance.”

Type “Ruth” into the search box. The word “search” was starting to bother me.

Avoid scare quotes, such as using them to indicate a term is used as slang or to signal the reader that the term is not the writer’s, or is being applied in an unusual way. Use sparingly. Don’t apologize with quotes, find a better word.

The debate turned into a free-for-all, not The “debate” turned into a free-for-all.

Unfamiliar language and terms not in the dictionary, such as those listed here that are common with some students, should be defined on first reference. See [Some Notes on Language](#).

Ally, allyship - someone expressing solidarity with an oppressed group

See [Non-English words and phrases](#) for additional guidance on quotation marks.

Slashed constructions

Avoid slashed constructions where possible: *internship/research experience*

Use “and” or “or” construction instead.

internship or research experience

If slashes are used, no spaces before or after them.

internship/research experience

Exception: when used to show a line break in quoted poetry.

Spaces

One space after period ending a sentence.

No space between initials.

T.S. Eliot

C.J. Law

Tenses

Headlines are in present tense.

Stories are in the past tense.

Commonly used words and phrases

3D

9/11 is most commonly used

advisor, not adviser	editor-in-chief
Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop	email
(preface with “Adobe”)	fax
African American (n., adj.)	fieldwork
No hyphen. Use African American when	filmmakers
the person is of African descent (vs.	filmmaking
Caribbean, e.g.).	first-come, first-served
all right (never alright)	firsthand
alum, alums (not alumna or alumnae)	firsties
antisemitism	first-year (adj.) Not a noun. First-year
Asian, not Oriental	students take first-year seminars
Asian American (no hyphen)	during their first year at Mount
Black when referring to race	Holyoke. Do not use freshman.
brand-new	First-Year Seminar Program
cannabis, not marijuana	Five Colleges, singular because
catalog	“Consortium” is understood
change-maker (per A.P.)	Five College Consortium
check-in (n. and adj.)	Five Colleges, Inc.
campuswide	Five College system
citywide	full-time (adj.)
class of ... lowercase in running text	full time (noun)
collegewide (Collegewide when	fundraising
referring to the College)	GPA
coauthor	green (in terms of sustainability)
co-captain	hands-on, but avoid as a cliché
co-chair	health care
cocurricular, not extracurricular	Hilltowns
co-founder	hip-hop
codirector	home page
coed	Indigenous (capped)
commonwealth of Massachusetts, not state	interdisciplinary
consensus, not general consensus	initiative, not new initiative
counselor	interlibrary
cross-disciplinary	internet
data (n.) takes a singular verb and pronouns	kosher/halal
when writing for general audiences;	LGBT and LGBTQ are both acceptable
plural in scientific/academic writing	Latinx
daylong	liberal arts education (no hyphen)
decision-making (all uses)	lifelong
devalue	livestream, livestreaming
disabled, not handicapped	log in (v.)
Division III in the NCAA	login (n., adj.)
Diwali, the autumn festival of lights	log out (v.)

logout (n., adj.)
 long-range (adj.)
 long-standing
 long-term (adj.)
 longtime
 makerspace
 multicultural
 multidisciplinary
 multiethnic
 New England Public Radio, NEPR
 nationwide
 nonfiction
 nonmajor
 nonprofit
 nonracial
 nontraditional
 nonviolent
 non-Western
 OK
 off-campus (adj.)
 ongoing
 overall
 online
 on-site, off-site
 part-time (adj.)
 P.E.
 people of color, not minorities
 people with disabilities, not handicapped
 phonathon
 Pioneer Valley, the valley
 Posse Scholar, Posse scholars
 postbaccalaureate
 postcollege
 postdoctoral
 postgraduation
 postgraduate
 postsecondary
 practicum, practicums
 pre-health
 pre-law
 pre-medical, pre-med
 pre-registration
 present-day
 problem solving (n.)
 problem-solving (adj.)
 résumé, per AP
 Romance languages
 RSVP
 same-sex marriage, not gay marriage
 self-consciousness
 self-knowledge
 small-scale
 short- and long-term
 socioeconomic
 STEM, acceptable on first reference but
 spell out shortly thereafter: science,
 technology, engineering and math
 student-athlete
 swastika, see below under Race and
 Ethnicity
 task force
 trailblazing students, trailblazer
 traditional-age student
 ultimate, when referring to the sport. Do not
 use Frisbee, which is trademarked.
 underrepresented
 United States (n.)
 URL, URLs
 U.S. (adj., as in U.S. government) and noun
 versus, not vs., in running text
 vs., in athletic events
 well-being
 West Coast
 Western culture
 western Massachusetts
 western New England
 website, the web, webinar
 white when referring to race. Do not use
 Caucasian.
 work-study (n., adj.)
 world-wide
 yearlong

Trademarked terms

Words that are registered trademarks should be capitalized. Avoid using where possible. If a trademarked term must be used, make sure the term is actually appropriate. That is, be sure the photocopier is actually a Xerox, not a Canon.

Cyclone fence (chain-link fence)
Frisbee (flying disc)
Geopiers (rammed aggregate pier system)
Kleenex (tissue)
Listserv (email lists)
Xerox (photocopier)

Write the company name following copy editing standards.

Adidas, not adidas

Toys R Us, not Toys “R” Us

The symbols ® and ™, which often appear on product packaging and in advertisements, are not required and should be avoided wherever possible, and always in running text. Friendly Military Schools may be the exception.

Usage dos and don'ts

affect and effect

Affect is usually a verb, and effect is usually a noun. But effect functions as a verb when it bears the sense to bring about, such as regarding changes or solutions.

Mount Holyoke is affected by students who want to face, embrace and effect change.

fact-checking

Do not assume you know the correct name of a proper noun, even Mount Holyoke terms. Be sure to check, typically on an official website. If you don't want to use the formal name, you can lowercase the part that is not official.

Big Y World Class Market — but Big Y supermarket

Which Fulbright program, the Fulbright U.S. Student Program or the Fulbright Scholar Program?

“The Godfather” — “The” is part of the title

Cate Blanchett has a c and two t's.

Gamble Auditorium is in the Art Building, not the Art Museum Building.

first generation

Use the term only when describing someone as the first in their family to attend college.

As an adjective it is hyphenated. Do not use first-gen.

She is a first-generation college student.

Avoid the term when describing one's personal or familial immigration status, as dictionary entries vary: "First-generation American" can refer to either people who were foreign-born and have taken up permanent residence in the United States, or to the native-born children of foreign-born parents who have taken up permanent residence in the United States.

Her parents immigrated from China when they were teenagers.

i.e., e.g., Use periods and a comma.

i.e. means "in other words" or "that is"

e.g. means "for example"

Impact — a noun, not a verb.

This effort will have a positive impact. Avoid: This effort was very impactful.

lay and lie

Lay is a transitive verb. It requires a direct object. lay–laid–laid

Now I lay me down to sleep. Lay your pencils down.

I laid the bowl there yesterday.

These rumors have been laid to rest.

Lie is an intransitive verb. It never takes a direct object. lie–lay–lain

Lie down and rest.

She lay down on the bed.

He hasn't yet lain down.

lesser and fewer

Less is for amounts or mass nouns such as less salt, dirt, water. Fewer is for countable things such as fewer people, calories, suggestions.

less money, fewer dollars

more important — not more importantly.

noun plus gerund

Unless these compounds appear closed or hyphenated in Webster's New World College Dictionary, they should be open.

decision making

problem solving

bookbinding

noun plus participle

Adjectival compounds consisting of a noun plus a participle are usually hyphenated.

decision-making process

interest-bearing loan

on to

Do not use onto unless the combination is used to mean “end up on top of.”

Let’s move on to better things. You can log on to the server. But: He jumped onto the car.

Quoting

Condensing a statement within quotations is acceptable if the exact meaning is not lost. This is particularly true when showing the person quoted the story in advance of publication. Ellipses in such quotes are therefore to be avoided. At times, paraphrasing without using quotes may be preferable as long as the exact meaning is retained.”

When attributing a quote, use “said.” Avoid “explained,” “replied,” “laughed,” “added,” etc.

that and which

Use “that” for nonrestrictive clauses. *The cups that broke were red.*

Use “which” for restrictive clauses. *The cups, which were red, broke when I dropped them.*

Inclusive Language

In general, the [Conscious Style Guide](#) is a good resource for writing about ability, age, appearance, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, etc. The AP style guide addresses these issues as well, especially in its [frequently updated section on race-related coverage](#).

Given the nearly eight billion people in the world, finding the right word to please everyone is unlikely. Lin-Manuel Miranda spoke to this [in a recent interview with IndieWire](#), when he was asked about Latinx. Noting that there are 32 Spanish-speaking countries, he said, “Literally, no word is going to make everyone happy.”

He noted that “Latiné” is the gender-neutral term more commonly used by people of Latin descent in the LGBTQ community, rather than Latinx. “Latiné is great because it’s Latino-created,” he said. “I’m cool with all of it. I use them interchangeably because I think the pie is still cooling and it will never be perfect, because it’s trying to capture too much stuff.”

Additionally, it’s important to note that the Mount Holyoke community is wide-ranging in many areas, including age, nationality and fluency in English. In order to be respectful and inclusive, it’s important not to assume a common frame of reference. Not everyone knows the 1950s TV show “I Love Lucy,” or hip-hop founder DJ Kool Herc or the Dickens novel “Great Expectations.”

Above all, respect, clarity and simplicity are key. Below are a few tips, followed by some generally accepted terms at this time. Refer to those resources above for up-to-date recommendations.

1. Avoid jargon and exclusive language.

Insider language, especially academic jargon, can be confusing and off-putting. Be specific. *She taught four courses a year.* *Not:* Her teaching load was four courses.

Consider Joe Biden's approach: "He relishes freewheeling discussion, interrupting aides and chiding them for what he deems overly academic or elitist language. 'Pick up your phone, call your mother, read her what you just told me,' he likes to say, according to aides. 'If she understands, we can keep talking.' Aides made a point of editing out all abbreviations other than U.N. and NATO." — New York Times, Jan. 16, 2021

In the interest of inclusivity and in recognition of the College's diverse populations, don't assume every reader will know what common terms are. If there's room, spell out what might seem like common terms. Define on first mention.

Advanced Placement, or AP, is a high school course that offers college credit
International Baccalaureate, or IB, is a school for students ages 3-19 who study a specific international curriculum.

2. Avoid sexist language.

Be conscious of language. Avoid language overt and subtle, such as lady doctor, lady luck, manhunt, man cave.

doctor, not lady doctor

letter carrier or postal worker, not mailman

firefighter, not fireman

humanity, not mankind

3. Singular they/them/themself is acceptable.

The use of singular they, aka epicene they, has been around for centuries and can be found in [Chaucer, Shakespeare and the King James Bible](#). It is acceptable in the style guides of the Associated Press and the Chicago Manual of Style, as well as academic style guides such as MLA and APA. The following guidelines are adapted from the AP's online style guide.

Always respect a person's chosen pronouns.

Do not confuse the use of singular they with transgender issues.

Clarity is also essential. Many of our readers may be unfamiliar with the use of they/them as a personal pronoun to indicate gender neutrality, although this is rapidly changing. Use the person's name or rewrite the sentence where possible, to avoid confusion. *The professor said*

Dana could get the paper Tuesday.

In most cases, a plural pronoun should agree in number with the antecedent.

The students loved the movie their professor showed them.

Use “they are” when referring to a singular person, rather than “they is.”

Do not use the generic male voice to indicate gender neutrality. Reword where possible to avoid gender. Avoid s/he or his/hers. Avoid xe or ze and other gender-neutral pronouns and if used, explain.

4. Race and ethnicity

Race and ethnic groups should not be mentioned unless relevant to the story. When used, follow the person’s preference. Do not use a hyphen unless the term is a compound adjective.

Polish American but *Polish-American food*

Some common terms

Asian, not Oriental

African American or Black

The adjective African American or Black are acceptable for an American Black person of African descent. Note that Black and African American are not interchangeable. People from the Caribbean, for instance, often refer to themselves as Caribbean American, or by specific country: *Haitian American*. Follow the person’s preference.

American Indian or Native American

Follow the person’s preference. Where possible, be precise and use the name of the tribe or nation. *Cherokee, Aleut, Diné*

Ally, allyship

expressing solidarity with an oppressed group

cannabis

Do not use marijuana, which has racist origins.

BIPOC, or Black, Indigenous, people of color

Caucasian. Do not use.

cisgender (not cis, or cis gender, or cis gendered)

A person whose gender identity matches their anatomical identity at birth. Used if necessary to refer to people who are not transgender in stories about gender, as a means to distinguish people from one another. Do not use a term such as *normal*. Not synonymous with *heterosexual*, which refers to sexuality.

COVID-19

The Associated Press has issued what they call a topical guide about COVID-19. Using COVID-19, the new coronavirus or the new virus are all acceptable terms on first reference for COVID-19. Note that it takes the article the. Because COVID-19 is the name of the disease, not the virus, it is not accurate to write “a new virus called COVID-19.”

gender nonconforming (n.), gender-nonconforming (adj.)

Acceptable in broad references as a term for people who do not conform to the traditional view of two genders. Not synonymous with transgender.

The organization is offering a weekly lunch for gender-nonconforming students.

Indigenous (capitalized)

Latine/x

Gender-neutral forms of Latino or Latina to describe, relating to, or marked by Latin American heritage.

LGBT, LGBTQ

Stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (and questioning and/or queer). Both are acceptable per AP.

microaggression (n.)

Brief, casual remarks or actions that send denigrating messages to individuals because of their group membership.

nonbinary, adj.

a term that relates to, or being a person who, identifies with or expresses a gender identity that is neither entirely male nor entirely female

swastika

When the swastika is displayed in the West as a symbol of antisemitism and white supremacy, it is referencing Nazi symbolism from the 1930s. But versions of it also have deep meaning throughout the world, ancient and modern, as a symbol of prosperity and good fortune, in particular to Hindus, Jains and Buddhists. Use sensitivity when writing about it and be sure to put it into context.

transgender, adj., trans on second reference

denoting or relating to a person whose sex assigned at birth does not match their gender identity. Identify people as transgender only if relevant and use the name by which they live publicly. Use transgender on first reference. When relevant, say transgender man or transgender woman. In subsequent references, trans man or trans woman are acceptable. Do not use transgender as a noun. Do not use the term transgendered.

Sam is a transgender man. Alison is transgender.

white (lowercase)

Writing for the web

At least two-thirds of Americans have smartphones, and most people read online text on their phones.

- Keep online text in short paragraphs.
- Use bullet points, **bolding** and other tools for readability.
- Avoid *italics*, which are very hard to read online.
- Never underline for any reason other than linked text.
- All images must have alt text, per federal law, for accessibility purposes.
- All photos should have captions, which can also serve as alt text and hover text. Identify who is in the picture and where they were, where possible.

- All artwork posted online must have a credit, as provided by the collection from which it was borrowed. The typical format is "Title of Work," year.

Medium/materials, dimensions. Housing institution or collection.

Berenice Abbott (American, 1898-1991), The Science Pictures: Water Pattern, 1982. Gelatin silver print photograph. Gift of Joseph R. and Ruth Lasser (Ruth H. Pollak, Class of 1947). MHC Art Museum, South Hadley, Mass. Photograph by Laura Shea. 1983.21.9

Hyperlinks

Do not underline. Only text linked to a URL is underlined.

Do not spell out a URL in running text: "The program may be found here:

<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/>." Avoid language such as, "The program may be found [here](#)" or, "Click [here](#)."

Instead, link to a noun phrase or a couple of appropriate words so the reader knows what exactly they are clicking on. *The [story about Mountain Day](#) mentioned my friend.*

Do not spell out an email address. Set email addresses up as hyperlinks using the person's name where appropriate.

Email [Christian Feuerstein](mailto:Christian.Feuerstein) or call her at x2809.

Keep a balance on what is hyperlinked in online text. Link where appropriate but don't overlink. Keep the user on the Mount Holyoke site, where possible.

###