University of Wisconsin-River Falls

Writing Style Guide
Updated June 2016

Use of a writing style guide helps increase the clarity and effectiveness of communications by consistent use of language, spelling and punctuation.

Many organizations create a "house" style guide that is particular to an institution. This writing style guide is such and serves to promote consistency and accuracy in writing at UW-River Falls. Anyone writing for print or web on behalf of UW-River Falls should adhere to this Writing Style Guide.

If no entry is found in this guide, the AP Stylebook should be considered the reference of choice, followed by Webster’s New World College Dictionary. Refer questions to University Communications and Marketing at 715-425-3771.

Abbreviations, acronyms:
Avoid abbreviations or acronyms readers will not quickly recognize. Do not abbreviate the words professor, agriculture, association or university in text. These words, however, may be abbreviated in a headline. Example: Prof., Assoc.

Spell out all titles on first reference. Example: University of Wisconsin-River Falls. Use “UW-River Falls” or “UWRF” on second reference; or “Biology Professor John Jones,” and use “Jones” on second reference.

Academic degrees:
Avoid using academic abbreviations in text. Example: He holds a master of science degree in teaching. (not "He holds a M.S.T.") However, "John Jones, Ph.D., is an English professor" is acceptable.

Use an apostrophe in bachelor’s degree and master’s degree. They are lowercase as common nouns. Use "Master of " (no "s" when followed by “of”) and master's degree (includes an "apostrophe s" when followed by the word “degree”).

When writing out degrees for a list of names, always use the full name and set the degree
off by a comma. Example: John Jones, B.A. or John Jones, Bachelor of Arts.

Avoid using the courtesy title "Dr." except for a physician (M.D.). Use Ph.D. following the name instead.

Do not use a courtesy title and degree abbreviation together. Example: Dr. John Jones, Ph.D. Just use "John Jones, Ph.D., taught the course."

**Academic departments:**
Capitalize official department names: Biology Department, English Department. Do not use "Department of." Do not abbreviate the word "Department" in a department name.

Use only a consistent abbreviation for a department and only on second reference. Example: Health and Human Performance Department (HHP), then HHP on second reference. College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), use CAS on second reference.

**Academic titles:**
Use lowercase and spell out titles when they are not used with an individual’s name. Example: The dean provided a list of students.

Capitalize a title before a name. Example: Dean of Students Joe Smith; but lowercase a title following a name: Joe Smith, dean of students.

Capitalize and spell out formal titles, but use lowercase for modifiers in the title before a name. Example: Professor John Jones, history Professor Tom Smith.

**Acronyms**
Include an acronym in parentheses after spelling out the name in first reference. Use the acronym only in further references.

**Addresses:**
The official address of UW-River Falls is 410 S. 3rd St., River Falls, WI 54022 (Please note that south is abbreviated, 3rd is not spelled out, and street is also abbreviated.)

Use the abbreviations Ave., Blvd., and St., only with a numbered address. Example: 410 S. 3rd St.

Spell out and capitalize when part of a formal street name without a house number. Example: Cascade Avenue.

Use lowercase and spell out when used alone or with more than one street name. Example: Third and Spruce streets.

For addresses, use postal state abbreviations below.

Postal state abbreviations: (Use only with addresses) AL, AK, AZ, AR, CA, CO, CT, DE,
FL, GA, HI, ID, IL, IN, IA, KS, KY, LA, ME, MD, MA, MI, MN, MS, MO, MT, NE, NV, NH, NJ, NM, NY, NC, ND, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VT, VA, WA, WV, WI, WY.

Adviser:
When referring to academics use “adviser,” not “advisor.” Correct: Advisory.

Affect, effect:
Affect means to influence and should not be used as a noun (except as a term in psychology to describe an emotion). Example: How will the electrical outage affect campus?

Effect, used as a verb, means to cause “to effect change.” As a noun, it means result. Example: What is the effect of the outage on campus?

Ages:
Always use figures.

Example: a 2-year-old spotted his mom, his dad is 29 years old. The student, 20, has a brother. The student is in his 20s (no apostrophe).

Note the hyphenation of age as a compound modifier preceding the noun. Example: a 20-year-old student.

All-America, all-American:
Use “all-America” when referring to a team and “all-American” when referring to a player or individual.

All right, a lot:
They are two words: all right and a lot. Please avoid using these terms.

Already:
It is one word: already. Do not use "all ready."

Alumna, Alumnae, Alumnus, Alumni:
“Alumna” is one woman. “Alumnae” is more than one female.

“Alumnus” is one man. “Alumni” is a pair or group that contains at least one male.

Use “alumni” when referring to a group of men and women. “Alum/alums” may be used in informal instances, such as alumni event promotions, social media messaging, etc.

Ampersand:
Spell out the word "and" unless the ampersand is part of a proper name. Example: Barnes & Noble.
**Annual:**
An event cannot be described as “annual” until it has been held at least two successive years. Do not use the term “first annual.” Instead, note that sponsors plan to hold an event “annually.”

**Apostrophe:**
Plural possessive: children's, women's, men's, coaches', players'
Singular possessive: university's, coach's, team's, player's

**Associations and Conferences:**
Capitalize the entire name of a conference or association; do not capitalize generic terms. Example: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the association; Eighth Annual Photography Conference, the conference.

**Bookstore:**
The university bookstore is called the "Falcon Shop." The Falcon Shop is located in the University Center.

**Buildings:**
Use the following names when referring to buildings on campus:

**Academic and administrative building names:**
Agricultural Engineering Annex
Agricultural Science Planetarium
C.H.I.L.D. Child Care Center
Centennial Science Hall (CSH)
Observatory
Central Heating Plant and Central Chilled Water Plant
Chalmer Davee Library (pronounced da-VEE)
David Rodli Hall (Rodli Hall)
E.H. Kleinpell Fine Arts: (KFA)
William W. Abbott Concert Hall
Blanche Davis Theatre
Sanford Syse Theatre (Black Box)
Food Science Addition
Greenhouse
Hagestad Hall
Maintenance and Central Stores Building
North Hall
Regional Development Institute (RDI)
South Hall
Walker D. Wyman Education Building (WEB)
**Athletics buildings:**
Emogene Nelson Building
  Human Performance Lab
Falcon Center
R.A. Karges Center (pronounced KAR-gus) (Karges Center)
Ramer Field and Sports Complex
Robert P. Knowles Physical Education and Recreation Center (Knowles Center)
Walter H. Hunt Arena (Hunt Arena)

**Residence halls:**
Do not use "dorm." They are residence halls.
Crabtree Hall
Grimm Hall
Hathorn Hall
Jesse H. Ames Suites (Ames Suites)
  Ann Lydecker Living Learning Center
Johnson Hall
May Hall
McMillan Hall
Parker Hall
Prucha Hall
Stratton Hall
George R. Field South Fork Suites (South Fork Suites)

**Other buildings:**
Campus Farm (located at 1475 S. Wasson Lane, River Falls)
  Falcon Frontier Days Rodeo Arena
Mann Valley Farm (located at 129 S. Glover Rd., River Falls)
  Dairy Learning Center
Melvin Wall Amphitheatre (Wall Amphitheatre) (note the "re.")
University Center (UC)
  Kinnickinnic Theater ("er" and always spell out "Kinnickinnic.")
Kao House (located at 545 River Hills Drive, River Falls)

**Brochure titles/captions:**
The first letter of each word in titles/captions in brochures is capitalized unless it is a sentence, then use lowercase and punctuation. Headlines are lowercase except for the lead (first) word.

**Call-to-action:**
Do not use a colon in a call-to-action before the email address or URL. Examples: For more information, email admissions@uwrf.edu. For more information, call 715-425-3778. For more information, go to www.uwrf.edu.
Campuswide, nationwide
One word, no hyphen.

Cancel, canceled, canceling, cancellation

Capitalization:
Capitalize proper nouns. Capitalize titles when they fall before a name: Director John Doe. Lowercase when the title follows a name: John Doe, director of public affairs.

There is a tendency in academic writing to over-capitalize. Use capitalization sparingly. See AP style and the following UWRF style guide entries: academic titles; college, department, university names; committees; majors; organizations.

Do not capitalize the names of seasons, academic terms, or descriptive names for days. Examples: fall, second semester, spring semester.

Century:
Lowercase, spell out numbers less than 10. Examples: the first century, the 20th century.

Chair:
Not chairman, chairwoman or chairperson. Capitalize “chair” before a name. Example: Faculty Senate Chair Jane Smith. Lowercase “chair” following a name. Example: Jane Smith, chair of the Faculty Senate.

Class rankings:
In common text, use: Jane Smith, a freshman from Menomonie.

In sports only, use this format: Jane Smith (Fr., Menomonie, Wis.). Other abbreviations for the sports format are So., Jr., Sr. for classes. Also see state names entry.

Freshman (singular)/freshmen (plural) is used for both males and females.

Coach:
Capitalize only when used before the name. Example: John Doe is the men’s basketball coach; UWRF men’s basketball Coach John Doe.

Collective pronouns:
The Falcons are a group of players. Use collective pronouns such as they and their. Example: The Falcons lost their first tennis match Wednesday.

A team is a singular unit. Example: The team ended its season with a 20-14 win. A class, referring to a group of people, is singular. Faculty is singular. Staff is singular.
Colleges, departments, university names:
Capitalize the formal names of colleges within the university. Example: The Mathematics Department is in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Department titles are capitalized: Biology Department, Psychology Department. Do not use "Department of."

Use lowercase college, department, etc., when not used in the formal context. Example: The college held an information fair to promote its programs.

Always lowercase "university" when referring to UW-River Falls as an entity and generically. Example: The university (meaning UW-River Falls) recently built the George R. Field South Fork Suites.

For other campuses in the UW System use: UW-La Crosse. Note that all UW system campuses with two words have a space between the words: UW-La Crosse, UW-Stevens Point, UW-Eau Claire, UW-Green Bay, and UW-Superior. Do not hyphenate UW System. Use a hyphen in UW-River Falls, but not in UWRF.

For colleges and universities outside the UW System, spell out the complete name of the college and follow with the state, if not Wisconsin: Wartburg College, Iowa; Gustavus Adolphus, Minn. Second references: Wartburg, Gustavus Adolphus.

UWRF college names and abbreviations: College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences (CAFES); College of Arts and Sciences (CAS); College of Business and Economics (CBE); College of Education and Professional Studies (CEPS). For the proper name of a department on campus, use the search function on the UWRF main page to find the correct name to refer to the department.

Colon, semicolon:
Use a colon at the end of a sentence to introduce lists. Capitalize the first word after a colon only if it is a proper noun or the start of a complete sentence.

Use a colon to introduce a longer quotation within a paragraph and to end all paragraphs that introduce a paragraph of quoted material.

Use a semicolon to separate items in a list when any one item contains commas. Example: The following students were in the play: John Doe, Mondovi; Jane Doe, Winona, Minn.; and Mary Smith, Waverly, Iowa.

Commas:
Do not use serial commas in a list joined by a conjunction: Use "red, white and blue" rather than "red, white, and blue."

Place commas inside quotation marks at all times. Example: “I didn’t want to go,” the student said.
When a sentence starts with “If” or “For” it needs a comma. Example: If you arrive at noon, you will be too early.

Do not use a comma to separate a title and a name if the title is before the name. The title only gets enclosed in commas if it follows a name. Example: “It was a cold day,” Joe Smith, director of admissions, said.

Committees:
Capitalize the full name of a committee. Example: Student Activities Committee.

Lowercase the second references. Example: The committee met yesterday.

Capitalize Faculty Senate, Academic Staff Council and Student Senate.

Commencement:
Capitalise in all references.

Composition titles:
Use quotations marks around the titles of books, anthologies, songs, movies, plays, operas, television programs, lectures, speeches and works of art. Do not use quotation marks with reference works (for example: Encyclopedia Britannica), or around names of magazines, newspapers or professional journals.

Corporation:
Abbreviate corporation as Corp. when a company or government agency uses the word at the end of its name. Example: Gulf Oil Corp., the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.

Spell out corporation when it occurs elsewhere in a name. Example: The Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Course titles:
Lowercase all course titles that do not include proper nouns. Example: She took a course in history; she must take freshman English.

Course titles are capitalized when written: “Sociology of Gender Roles”

Capitalize only when the course title is used with a numeral. Example: History 101 is a required course.

Course work:
Two words.

Courtesy titles:
Do not use Mr., Mrs., Miss or Ms. Only use the person's first and last name.
Repeat first and last names or use first names only when quoting people with the same last name in a story.

Do not use the courtesy title "Dr." with academic degrees. Use: "John Jones, Ph.D." instead of "Dr. John Jones." "Dr." is only used to refer to medical doctors.

**Currently:**
Do not use the word “currently.” It is just an extra word that is not necessary. Example: She is the chair of the English Department. Do not write “She is currently the chair of the English Department.”

**Dash:**
A dash is two hyphens or preferably one em/long (—) dash with no spaces before or after the previous and following word. Shift + option + hyphen on a Mac.

Use a dash without spaces before/after to offset a phrase. Example: The new addition—$249 million—will be an asset to students.

**Dates:**

Refer to the day or days of the week for scheduled events within seven days of publication. Example: The concert will be held Thursday, Oct. 3. The play will run Thursday through Saturday, Oct. 3-6.

Do not include the year if the date falls within the current year. Use year for subsequent or previous years. Example: The concert is May 3. The last concert was May 3, 2010.

**Daylight-saving time:**
Not "savings." Note the hyphen. Lowercase in all uses. Example: daylight-saving time.

**Days of the week:**
Capitalize and do not abbreviate.

When the day of the week is used with the date and year, it needs to be spelled out, but the month is abbreviated (if it’s a month that is commonly abbreviated). Example: Thursday, Sept. 3, 2015 and Wednesday, April 7. (The day of the week is never abbreviated).

Do not use superscripts (3rd and 4th etc.) in dates. Don’t use the year if it is the current year. Include the year only if it happened in the past year or earlier or if it is happening in a future year.
**Defendant:**
Do not use "defendent."

**Degrees:**
See Academic Degrees.

**Dependent:**
Do not use "dependant."

**Department:**
Never abbreviate.

Lowercase whenever department stands alone. Example: The department is hiring.

Lowercase in plural uses. Example: The physics and chemistry departments are located on the same floor.

Capitalize department names. Example: We toured the Journalism Department and the Athletics Department.

Capitalize when referring to U.S. agencies. Example: U.S. Department of Education.

**Dimensions:**
Use figures and spell out inches, feet, yards, etc., to indicate depth, height, length and width.

Hyphenate adjectival forms before nouns. Example: He is 5 feet 6 inches tall, the 5-foot-6-inch man, the 5-foot man, the basketball team signed a 7-footer.

**Directions, regions:**
Lowercase directional or area descriptions when referring to a section of a state or city. Example: He drove west. The cold front was moving east.

Example: He was touring western and west-central Florida, then southern Atlanta.

Capitalizes regions or specific parts of the country. Example: She was travelling through the Midwest. She has a Southern accent. It will bring showers to the East Coast by morning.

**District:**

**Dollars:**
Use "$2 million." Not "2 million dollars" or "$2 million dollars."
E.g., i.e.:
E.g. means “for example” and introduces an example or a short list of names or other items. I.e. means “that is” and either repeats preceding information in different words or amplifies the information given.

Both are always set off by commas.

Email:
Do not use a hyphen in "email." The "e" is not capitalized unless it starts a sentence. Use a hyphen with other e-terms: e-book, e-newsletter, e-business, e-commerce.

Emeritus, emeriti:
The word emeritus is added to formal titles to denote both men and women who have retired and retain their rank or title. When used, place the word emeritus after the formal title. Example: Chancellor Emeritus George Field; Professor Emeritus Barbara Anderson.

Emeriti is plural. Example: Emeriti faculty attended the luncheon.

Enroll, enrolled, enrolling

Entitled:
Use “entitled” to mean a right to have or do something. Do not use it to mean "titled."
Correct: She was entitled to the promotion. Correct: The book was titled “Gone With the Wind.”

Etc., et al.:
Etc. refers to objects; et al. (and others) refers to persons. Do not end lists of persons with etc.; use "and others." Do not use etc. at the end of a list prefaced by "for example" or "such as."

Ethnicity:
Do not mention unless pertinent to the story.
Capitalize the proper names of nationalities, peoples, races, tribes, etc.: Arab, Arabic, African, American, etc.

Among others, examples include Asian, Native American and Hispanic.

Lowercase black.

American Indian is the AP preferred term for Native American.

Use a person’s preference, especially if you plan to use the term African-American.

Event happenings:
State in order of time, day of week, date, location. Example: The group will meet at 6
p.m. Thursday, May 3, in the Falls Room, University Center. “May 3” is another way of saying “Thursday” and should be surrounded by commas. Also, do not include the word “on” before the day of the week.

**Every day/everyday:**
"Every day" is an adverb. Example: I get up at six every day. Substituting “each day” for “every day” will help you keep them separated.
"Everyday" (no space between the words) is an adjective meaning commonplace. Example: Everyday drugs like aspirin; everyday chores like cleaning.

**Exclamation points:**
Limit the use of exclamation points. Never use more than one to end a sentence.

**Falcons:**
Refer to the team with the plural form: Falcons basketball team. Falcon (no “s”) may be used to refer to an individual player.

Be careful in use of possessives and plurals. Example: The Falcons’ home court (not -s's).

DO NOT use the term "lady" Falcons. Use women’s team, the women, or simply the Falcons.

**Farms**
Use "Campus Farm" and "Mann Valley Farm."

The words "laboratory," "No. 1" and "No. 2" are no longer included in the names.

The Campus Farm is located at 1475 S. Wasson Lane, River Falls. (equine farm)
The Mann Valley Farm is located at 129 S. Glover Rd., River Falls. (Dairy Learning Center)

**Farther/further:**
Farther is used to indicate distance; further indicates to a degree. Example: She ran farther; they discussed the matter further.

**Festivities and events:**
Capitalize the proper names of events. Example: Homecoming, Commencement, Family Day, Unity in the Community, and Weeks of Welcome.

**Foundation:**
Proper title: UW-River Falls Foundation Inc.

On second reference capitalize “Foundation.” Example: The UWRF Foundation Inc. grants scholarship aid to students and awards grants to faculty. The Foundation also provides monetary awards to faculty and staff for outstanding service.
**Freddy Falcon:**
The university mascot is Freddy Falcon; not "Freddie," not "Freddy the Falcon."

**Freshman, freshmen:**
Freshman is one male or one female.
Freshmen are more than one, male or female.

**Game time:**
Always two words.

**Geographic names:**
The first source for the spelling of all foreign place names is Webster’s New World Dictionary. See the AP Stylebook geographic names entry.

**Handicapped, Disabled:**
In general, do not describe an individual as disabled or handicapped unless it is clearly pertinent to a story.

The preferred description is “a student who has a disability.” Refer to AP Stylebook entries for handicapped, disabled, impaired entry.

**His, her:**
Do not presume gender pronoun in constructing a sentence, but use the pronoun his when an indefinite antecedent without gender pronoun may be male or female: “firefighter,” not “fireman;” “security officer,” not “policeman.” Substitute neutral pronouns for the gender.

Frequently the best choice is a slight revision. Example: Reporters attempt to protect their sources.

**Homecoming:**
Capitalize in all references to the annual celebration.

**Hometowns:**
Always include a student’s hometown as part of the sentence. Example: Mary Smith of Elmwood was granted a $1,000 scholarship. (No comma before or after "of Elmwood")

Do not use a state following the city name if the city is located in our own state of Wisconsin, but include the appropriate state abbreviation with cities located in other states. If a city is not followed by a state, it implies that the city is located in Wisconsin.
Hyphens:
Use whenever ambiguity would result if it were omitted. 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. Hyphens are not used in comparative terms (high-low, etc).

Examples: A full-time job, a well-known man, a good time, an easily remembered rule, study-abroad course.

Re-elect. Re-election.

Internet:
The internet is lowercase. It is not the same as a web page or site, email, chat rooms or listservs. It is the network that allows connectivity and these entities to exist.

Use “web page” (two words) or “website” (one word). Both references are lowercase.

Its, it's:
“Its” is a possessive pronoun. “It's” is a contraction of "it is" or "it has"—not possessive.

J-Term:
J-Term is correct. Yes, it has a hyphen and “Term” is capitalized.

Job titles:
Job titles are lowercase unless they come before your name. Examples: I am a marketing coordinator at Acme Industries. Marketing Coordinator Jane Smith is going to post the ideas soon.

Laboratory farms:
Use "Campus Farm" and "Mann Valley Farm."

The words "laboratory," "No. 1" and "No. 2" are no longer included in the names.

The Campus Farm is located at 1475 S. Wasson Lane in River Falls. (equine)
The Mann Valley Farm is located at 129 S. Glover Rd., River Falls. (Dairy Learning Center)

Latter:
Refer to the second of two things, not the last in a series.

Lead, led:
Led is the past tense form of lead. Lead is also an element (pb)—be sure which you are referring to.

Less than, more than
Less, fewer:
Less refers to a quantity; fewer refers to a number. Example: less work; fewer books.

Letter winner, letter winners:
Do not use letterman or letterwoman.

Like, as:
Use like as a preposition to compare nouns and pronouns. It requires an object. Example: Jim blocks like a pro.

The conjunction as is the correct word to introduce clauses. Example: Jim blocks the linebacker as he should.

Majors/minors:
A student can major in a program, such as art history, or be a history major.

Major names are not capitalized unless a proper name is involved. Examples: John is a journalism major. His girlfriend is an English major. She is majoring in economics and chemistry. In college I majored in political science and minored in religious studies.

Meletean:
This is the name of the former UWRF yearbook. Refer to it in quotes, as any book (except works of reference—see AP guide).

Months:
Capitalize the names of months in all uses.

When a month is used with a specific date, abbreviate Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec. All other names of months are spelled out. Example: Thursday, Dec. 3, is going to be a great day and so is Monday, April 2.

Spell out when using alone, or with a year alone. Example: December; December 2010.

Names:
Never misspell a name. Ask all sources in a story how to spell his/her name. Ask if he/she has a preference for a shortened or full-length reference to their names. Do not assume "Michael" is "Mike."

Verify spelling of last names; is it Olson or Olsen? Beware of names with so-called "common" spellings. Always double-check the spelling of names.

No.:
Use as the abbreviation for number in conjunction with a figure to indicate a position or rank. Example: No. 1 man; No. 3 choice.
**Numerals:**
See AP Stylebook entry. Briefly, follow these examples: No. 1 team; 20th century; 1st Ward; first in line; first base; 5-year-old boy; the 1990s; 12 credits; two semesters.

Write out numbers one through nine; 10+ use Arabic numerals. Examples: There were three children there. We saw 10 elephants at the zoo.

Always use numerals for percentages: 5 percent. Do not use "%.

Write out numbers that begin a sentence. Example: Forty-five people attended…

If there are two references to the same item, and one is 10 or above, use numerals for both. Example: The program requires 36 credits, of which 9 are electives.

Use commas with a number over 1,000: 1,500.

Do not use "over" to estimate a number. "Over" is a spatial reference. Use "more than," "nearly," "about." Try to avoid "approximately."

**Obituaries:**
Do not use euphemisms such as "passed away" for the word “died.” A surviving partner is a wife, husband or companion.

**Obscenities:**
The use of obscene/offensive language in print should be avoided, but sometimes an offensive word is part of an important quote.

Do not use racial or ethnic slurs. Avoid offensive words rather than replace letters of offensive words with hyphens.

**Office:**
Do not capitalize office titles in general narrative unless it's part of the official title. Example: University Communications office, Financial Aid office.

Office, unit, division and center titles should be capitalized on university stationery, as headings on brochures, or in stand-alone titles.

**Official address of UW-River Falls:**
The official address of UW-River Falls is 410 S. 3rd St., River Falls, WI 54022 (Please note that south is abbreviated, 3rd is not spelled out, and street is also abbreviated.)

**OK, OK’d, OK’ing, Oks**
Do not use “okay,” use “ok.” Avoid using this term if possible.
**Online:**
One word.

**Organization and institutions:**
Capitalize the full names of organizations and institutions.

**Over, under:**
Both generally refer to spatial relationships. Example: The bird flew over the town. He walked under the bridge.

Do not use "Over 50 people attended the dance." Use "More than 50 people attend the dance."

**Percent:**
One word and spelled out. Do not use the symbol.

Use figures in all instances and avoid starting a sentence with a percentage. Example: Of the total, 25 percent were counted.

**People, persons:**
“People” is preferred to persons in all plural uses. Persons should only be used in a direct quote or as part of a title. Example: Bureau of Missing Persons.

"People" can become plural when it refers to more than one race or nation. Example: The indigenous peoples of South America.

**Phone numbers:**
Include the area code and write in the following manner: 715-425-3778. Do not use parenthesis around the area code. Do not use periods or dots to separate the numbers.

**Plays:**
Capitalize the titles of plays and put in quotes.

**Plurals:**
Beware of tricky plurals like media and data (both are plural). Example: The data are recorded. The media are invited. Also see "possessives" below.

**Political Parties, Office Holders:**

**Pounds:**
Spell out: do not abbreviate with "lbs." In tabular form, use lbs.
Possessives:
Add an apostrophe and the letter "s" to form the possessive of singular nouns not ending in “s” and for plural nouns not ending in "s": a man’s shoes, men’s shoes.

Add a single apostrophe and no "s" to form the possessive for both plural and singular nouns ending in "s" or an “s” sound. Example: for goodness’ sake, the Falcons’ mascot.

Use only a single apostrophe plus "s" when joint possession is intended. Example: Sally and Eric’s manuscript.

Prologue:
UWRF’s literary magazine. Refer to it in quotes as "Prologue."

Pronouns:
Use “that” for a thing or animal. Use “who” for a person or animals with names. Use “it” for a group, company, business or entity.

Quotation marks:
Use quotation marks to enclose direct quotations and to indicate the title of an article, section, volume and other parts of a longer document.

Always place periods and commas inside of closing quotation marks. Place semicolons and colons outside of closing quotation marks.

Place dashes, exclamation marks and question marks inside of quotation marks if they are part of the quotation; otherwise, place them outside of quotation marks.

Quotes:
Quotes should be used to convey unique information and should be their own separate paragraph with attribution. Do not overuse quotes. It is preferred to paraphrase quotes when possible.

Use “said” instead of “says” as “said” is more professional. Always begin the paragraph with the quote, not with who said it as that goes after you’ve hooked the reader with the quote.

Quotes within a quote are single quotations marks. Example: “I’ve learned to ‘take it like a girl’ in every aspect of my life,” Angela said.

Reference works:
Capitalize their proper names. Do not use quotation marks around the names of books that are primarily catalogs of reference material.

In addition to catalogs, this category includes almanacs, directories, dictionaries, encyclopedias, handbooks and similar publications.
Remuneration (money):
Not remuneration (means numbers or re-counting).

Rooms:
Generally, do not use “room” or “room number” with a location. Instead use: The meeting is in 138 Rodli Hall. Put the room number first, followed by the location, not the other way around.

Capitalize the word “room” if followed by a number or an actual name. Example: Room 137 or St. Croix River Room.

Always spell out "Kinnickinnic." Do not use "Kinni Theater" when referring to the Kinnickinnic River Theater.

Roundabout:
Roundabout is correct. No hyphens. All one word.

Scores, points:
Follow AP Sports Guidelines for each sport. For basketball, use three-point or three-pointer.

Second reference:
This term applies to all subsequent references to an organization or individual within a story.

The listing of an acceptable term for second reference does not mean that it always must be used after the first reference. Often a generic word such as “the agency, the commission, or the company” is more appropriate and less jarring to the reader.

See individual listings for second reference for the university, departments, names, etc. Do not capitalize "university" when used in second reference.

Semesters:
Seasons/semesters are lowercase unless part of a proper title. Example: I started school in fall 2015. Please note: “of” should not be used between the season and year. Example: She made the Dean’s List spring semester.

Spacing:
Use one space between sentences, not two. Do not indent paragraphs. Separate paragraphs by a blank line.

Special occasions:
Special occasions are not capitalized. Example: Thanks to everyone for the birthday wishes.
Words like birthday, anniversary, reunion and gala are lowercase. If you describe an event with a proper name (Sue’s Surprise 50th Birthday Bash), then use uppercase. Happy birthday is capitalized if you write “Happy Birthday, Zack!” It’s lowercase when you write, “I hope you had a happy birthday.”

**Spokesman, spokeswoman:**

Never spokesperson.

Although, whenever possible, refer to someone in non-gender terms. Example: The representative of the club…a member of the club…the president of the club…

**State names:**

Spell out the names of states when they stand alone without a city.

Eight states are not abbreviated: Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah. When used in conjunction with the name of a city, town or village, use this list of state abbreviations: (For addresses, use postal state abbreviations. See address entry.)

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Conn.  Ky.  Mo.  N.Y.  S.C.  Wis.
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Never include Wisconsin with a city in Wisconsin. With all other cities (outside of Wisconsin), abbreviate the sate name when preceded by a city. See list above for state abbreviations. Please note that these are different than postal abbreviations. Also note that a comma follows the state abbreviation when in the middle of a sentence. Example: He lived in Stillwater, Minn., before moving to River Falls.

**Strategic plan/campaign title:**

Do not place the name of the campaign title or the strategic plan in quotes. Just capitalize the first letter of each word. Example: The Rising to Distinction campaign was referenced at the gala as well as our strategic plan, Pathway to Distinction.

**Students:**

Include hometown, state (if other than Wisconsin), major and academic year when referring to UWRF students.

**Student organizations:**

On first reference use the complete title of a student organization according to the list published by the Involvement Center. Second references: "organization," "the club," "the council," "the board," etc. For a current list of student organizations, visit https://orgsync.com/login
Student Voice:
UWRF’s student newspaper. Always capitalize; do not italicize, do not put in quotes, do not bold. Example: It appeared in the Student Voice.

Telephone numbers:
The format for an on-campus number is four digits: 3895. Do not use “ext” or “x3895” for on-campus number. Example: Please call Sue in the Biology Department at 3895.

Off-campus telephone numbers should always include the area code before the seven-digit number: 608-222-1234. Use dashes to set off the area code; do not use parenthesis.

That (conjunction):
Use the conjunction “that” to introduce a dependent clause if the sentence sounds or looks awkward without it. When in doubt, include “that”.

That, which, who, whom:
Use "who" and "whom" when introducing a clause that refers to people and to animals with a name. Example: John Doe is the man who helped me.

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

Essential (dependent) and non-essential (independent) clauses: An essential clause cannot be eliminated without changing the meaning of the sentence. Do not set off an essential clause off from the rest of the sentence by commas. A non-essential clause can be eliminated without changing the meaning of the sentence and should be set off by commas.

“Who” or “whom” introduces a clause that refers to a human being or animal with a name. If unsure of which to use, insert a personal pronoun (he/him). If "he" is correct, use “who”. If "him" is correct, use “whom.”

“That” is the preferred pronoun to introduce clauses that refer to an inanimate object or an animal without a name. Example: It is the book that was recommended by a new author.

“Which” is the only acceptable pronoun to introduce a non-essential clause that refers to an inanimate object or an animal without a name. Example: It is the book, which was recommended, by a new author.

Theatre/theater:
Use the American English spelling “theater” as generic noun. Proper names such as Blanche Davis Theatre, Sanford Syse Theatre, Melvin Wall Amphitheatre use the British English spelling. Use “University Theatre” when referring to productions on campus arranged and starring university students.
The only exception on campus is the Kinnickinnic River Theater in the University Center where "er" is used. All other theatres on campus are "re."

Correct: Communication Studies and Theatre Arts Department.

**Time:**
Use figures except for noon and midnight. Use a colon to separate hours from minutes, except zero minutes. Use lowercase a.m. and p.m. Example: 11 a.m., 1 p.m., 3:30 p.m. Do not use “2:00” p.m. for zero minutes; drop the zeros and just use 2 p.m.

Do not use "12 noon" or "12 midnight." Just use "noon" or "midnight."

Avoid redundancies such as: 10 a.m. tomorrow morning, 10 p.m. Monday night, 12 noon Wednesday.

If you start by saying “between” or “from,” then you need to also use “to.” Do not use “between” or “from” and a hyphen. Examples: The party will be from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. The party will be 5:30-6:30 p.m.

**Titles:**
Capitalize the first letter of titles when they immediately precede personal names, but do not capitalize the first letter when they follow names. Example: Professor John Anderson went to bat. (No comma separates the title from the name when the title *precedes* the name.) Example: John Anderson, professor of physics, wanted to get on the bus, too. (Commas separate the title from the name when the title *follows* the name.)

Job titles are lowercase unless they come before your name. Examples: I am a marketing coordinator at Acme Industries. Marketing Coordinator Jane Smith is going to post the ideas soon.

Do not capitalize player’s positions in sports. Examples: linebacker Joe Anderson; quarterback Trent Green.

Capitalize the first letter of names of companies, schools, organizations, and religious bodies. Capitalize the first letter of names of government bodies. Capitalize and use quotations marks with the titles of books, magazines, newspapers, plays, movies, television series and other separately published works. Capitalize and use quotations marks for chapters of books, articles in magazines, news stories or editorials, acts within a play, episodes of a television series, or other sections of something separately produced or published.

Names of elected officials are preceded by their title. Example: Wisconsin Gov. Suzie Smith.
**Toward:**
Not towards.

**Travel, traveled, traveling, traveler**

**Twin Cities:**
Acceptable in any reference to the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul together.

If an event is held in only one of those cities, name it specifically. If a person is from a suburb, name it. Do not say someone is from the Twin Cities. That is not possible.

**University:**
Lowercase "university" unless it is part of an official title. Examples: He has a university education. The University of Wisconsin-River Falls is a public university. Thank you for your continued support of our university.

**University of Wisconsin System:**
The abbreviated version is UW System. No hyphen before “System.” Example: Ray Cross is the president of the UW System.

**University Police Department/Parking:**
Not "Campus Police" or "Campus Security." Capitalized as a department name.

**URLs:**
Lowercase all letters in URLs in all instances. Example: www.uwrf.edu

Do not include “https://” in web addresses as the www lets everyone know that it’s a web address. For an enrollment form, go to www.uwrf.edu/admissions

Do not use a colon to introduce the URL. Example: For more information, visit www.uwrf.edu.

**UW-River Falls:**
Use only these forms when referring to the University of Wisconsin-River Falls:

University of Wisconsin-River Falls (use hyphen/no spaces)
UW-River Falls (second reference only, use hyphen)
UWRF (second reference only, no hyphen)

The official address of UW-River Falls is 410 S. 3rd St., River Falls, WI 54022 (Please note that south is abbreviated, 3rd is not spelled out, and street is also abbreviated.)

Always spell out University of Wisconsin-River Falls in the lead paragraph of a story. Then in second reference, use UW-River Falls or UWRF.
**Verbs:**
In general, avoid awkward constructions that split from infinitive forms of a verb (to leave, to help, etc.) or compound forms (had left, are found out, etc.).

**Which vs. that:**
“That” is reserved for restrictive clauses, clauses that are essential to the meaning of a sentence. For nonrestrictive or nonessential clauses, use “which.” Examples: My bedroom, which is on the second floor, has a window. No bags that are over 50 pounds will be permitted.

**Who vs. that:**
When referring to inanimate objects or animals without a name, use “that.” When referring to human beings and animals with a name, use “who.” Example: The woman who opened the door for you is my mom.

**World Wide Web:**
In later references, web is acceptable and lowercase. Use lowercase and one word for website. Web page is lowercase and two words.

**WRFW FM 88.7:**
On second reference, use “WRFW” or “the station.” Make sure to mention that it is a Wisconsin Public Radio (WPR) affiliate.

**Years:**
Use figures, without commas. Example: 1975. Use commas only with a month and day: Dec. 18, 1994, was a special day.

Use an “s” without an apostrophe to indicate spans of decades or centuries. Example: the 1890s, the 1800s, the ‘80s (not 80’s).

Years are the lone exception to the general rule in numerals that a figure is not used to start a sentence. Example: 1976 was a very good year.