

Abbreviations, Acronyms and Initialisms

- Most are styled in capital letters without points:
FBI, CDC, UPS, AMA, IT, PC (personal computer), USA, UAE
- Some, mostly two-letter geographical names and academic degrees, use capital letters and take points: U.S., E.U., U.N., U.K., M.B.A., J.D.
- A few abbreviations use lowercase letters and take points:
p.r., b.s., p.c. (politically correct), r.p.m.
- TIME preference is to use *U.S.* instead of *United States* and *U.N.* instead of *United Nations*.

Possessives

- Singular common nouns, including those ending in *s*, take 's:
boy's, dog's, boss's, worker's, box's, gas's
- Plural common nouns that end in *s* take just an apostrophe:
girls', dogs', bosses', workers'
- Plural nouns that end in something other than *s* usually take 's:
men's, children's, mice's, Portuguese's, Red Sox's
- Singular proper nouns not ending in *s* usually take 's:
Nixon's, Sarah's
- Singular and plural proper nouns ending in *s* take an apostrophe:
Jones', Phillips' (exception: Court of St. James's)
- Singular proper nouns ending with an unpronounced *s* take 's:
Des Moines's, Arkansas's
- Singular proper nouns ending in *ss* take 's unless the next word begins with *s* or another sibilant:
Congress's, Hess's, for goodness' sake
- Nouns that end in *-ce* take 's unless a sibilant comes next:
Constance's wish, for convenience' sake

Spelling

- First reference is *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th edition*. TIME usually uses the first spelling (but check the Word List).
- If the dictionary says a word is *cap* or *usu cap*, capitalize. If it says a word is *often cap*, *often lowercase* or *usu lowercase*, lowercase.
- TIME uses accents on words, including names, in Spanish, French, German, Italian and Portuguese. We occasionally make exceptions for certain well-known people and place names, e.g., Björk

Measurements

- Abbreviations for U.S. measurements: ft., gal., in., lb., m.p.h., oz., sq. ft., yd. (note periods). Don't abbreviate *mile* or *acre*, except in sq. mi.
- Abbreviations for metrics: cm, g, kg, km, km/h, L, m, mg, ml, mm, sq m (no periods). Don't abbreviate *hectare*.
- TIME usually provides metric conversions for U.S. measurements in parentheses following the measurement.

Headlines and Title Case

- In headlines and titles, capitalize all words except:
Prepositions of four letters or fewer: e.g., for, in, like, of, with
Conjunctions of four letters or fewer: e.g., and, as, but, if, than
Articles: a, an, the
- In print, capitalize the first word of each line of multiline headlines
- Capitalize parts of phrasal verbs, e.g., Turn On the Light
- In heads only, capitalize the first word following a colon.

Commas

- TIME generally does not use a serial comma (a comma before *and* in a series) unless one item of a series can be misread:
He bought beans, celery and tomatoes at the market.
but—
He cooked beans and rice, celery, and chocolate soufflé.
(can be read as "rice, celery and chocolate soufflé"—yuck)

- Do not use a comma for restrictive phrases or clauses, i.e., those that begin with *that*: The book that he read was the first one in the series.
- Do use a comma for nonrestrictive phrases and clauses, i.e., those that begin with *which*: His favorite book, which he loved reading, was the first one in the series.
- TIME omits the comma before the names of close relatives, even if there is only one of them, e.g., My mother Nancy, her husband Dave

Numbers

- Generally, spell out numbers nine and below or at the beginning of a sentence. Use numerals for numbers 10 and higher, including millions, billions, etc.: nine apples, 10 ducks, 1 million students
- Use a dollar sign or cents sign (keystroke: Option+4) and a numeral for amounts of money in U.S. dollars: \$1 million, 47¢, \$2
- Use a percent sign and a numeral for percentages: 46%, 100%
- Use a numeral for ages of people: Sally, 7; 7-year-old Sally

Dates

- Abbreviate most months and use cardinal numbers:
From Dec. 5, 1997, to Sept. 11, 2001
- Month abbreviations:
Jan., Feb., March, April, May, June, July, Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.
- When just a month or season appears with a year, spell out the month (lowercase seasons) and do not use a comma:
August 1995, the fall of 2008

Place Names

- For U.S. and world cities that do not stand alone (see the Stand-Alone Cities list), identify with a state, province or country. Abbreviate U.S. states and Canadian provinces according to TIME abbreviation style (not the same as postal abbreviations):
Bozeman, Mont.; Albany, N.Y.; Hilo, Hawaii
- For U.S. and Canadian geographical designations other than municipalities and military bases, spell out the state or province:
Custer County, Colorado; Lake Okeechobee, Florida
- First reference for spelling is the Word List; second is *Webster's 11* geographical section; third is *Webster's New Geographical Dictionary*.

Personal Titles

- Always capitalize the title of a head of state or Cabinet-level official:
King Abdullah, the King, President Sarkozy, the President, the Vice President, the Prime Minister, the Premier
- Capitalize military, academic and most other government titles when they precede a name and are not modified:
General David Petraeus, Mayor Bloomberg, the general, the mayor, former mayor Ed Koch, former general Jones
- Political titles that include a geographical term are capitalized except when the title is modified, often by *former* or *ex*:
New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg; former New York City mayor Ed Koch
- Spell out most titles: Senator Boxer, Representative Paul Ryan
- Abbreviate *lieutenant* when it appears in conjunction with another military title, e.g., Lieut. General Smith but not when it stands alone or precedes *governor*: Lieutenant Governor Paterson

Capitalizing After Colons

- Lowercase the first letter after a colon unless it's part of a headline, a quotation (direct or implied), a question or a series of sentences that are parallel and subordinate to the colon:
The result: more cat food is being manufactured.
He wanted to know: How much cat food is that?
I told him: Enough cat food to fill a supertanker.

Trademarks and Names of Organizations

• TIME tries to respect trademarks and names of organizations as much as possible while still observing our preferred styles on capitalization and spelling. But we should avoid allowing words that are difficult to read, especially if they create “alphabet soup.” Many established names and brands are on the Word List. Some examples:

Alcoa
eBay
E-Trade
iPad, iPhone, iPod
JPMorgan Chase
NASCAR
Styrofoam
Walmart
Warner Bros.
Yahoo!

Titles of Works

- Italicize the names of:
 - Non-Time Inc. magazines: the *New Yorker*
 - Newspapers: the *New York Times*
 - Movies: *Great Expectations*
 - Paintings, sculptures, photographs, works of art: *The Thinker*
 - Radio and TV programs: the *Today* show
 - Video games: *Grand Theft Auto*
 - Series of books, movies, opera, etc.: the *Harry Potter* books
 - Books, long poems, plays, pamphlets, reference works, comic strips and government or nonprofit reports, even when the title is shortened: the *9/11 Commission Report*, *The Waste Land*
- Use quotation marks for the names of:
 - Songs: “I Got You Babe”
 - Articles: “Ford to City: Drop Dead”
 - Chapters: “The Long Road Home” but Chapter 12
 - Short stories: “Why I Live at the P.O.”
 - Short poems: “To a Mouse”
 - Essays: “In Praise of Shadows”
 - Sermons: “The Shortcut to Heaven”
 - Lectures: “Galactic Exploration”
 - Dissertations: “An Inquiry into the Metaphysics of Calculus”
 - Unofficial names of musical works: the “*New World*” *Symphony*
 - Exhibitions of multiple artworks: “Matisse Revealed”

• The names of blogs and websites are set in roman type, title case: the Huffington Post, Gawker

• Except in sans serif fonts, in text smaller than 8.5 points and on the Web, set Time Inc. magazines in small caps in roman type with the first letter capitalized: TIME, PEOPLE, SPORTS ILLUSTRATED, FORTUNE

Quotations and Quotation Marks

- TIME uses the present tense to attribute quotes given to a TIME writer; we use the past tense to attribute quotes not given to a TIME writer, including those made in a public speech.
- Exceptions are occasionally made in narrative pieces to preserve consistency of tense (e.g., when an anecdote is set entirely in the past).
- Brackets and ellipses can be used to indicate omission or changes to a written or spoken quotation. Make an ellipsis by typing three periods and, for the print magazine, inserting 100 points of kerning between each dot. A full space goes before and after the ellipsis. A complete sentence following an ellipsis should begin with a capital letter.
- TIME does not put individual letters in brackets to indicate capitalization or lowercasing. If it is important to show that the case of a word has been altered from the original, the whole word should be put in brackets instead.

Wrong: “[B]ecause of the election ...”

Right: “Because of the election ...” or “[Because] of the election ...”

Do not use an ellipsis to begin a quotation. It is understood that quotations are usually taken from larger sources.

Wrong: “... We hold these truths to be self-evident that ...”

Right: “We hold these truths to be self-evident that ...”

Hyphenation

- Noun+noun compounds: hyphenate before a noun.
 - a cocktail party
 - cocktail-party buzz
- Noun+adjective compounds: hyphenate regardless of position.
 - a power-hungry prince
 - The prince is power-hungry.
- Adj.+noun compounds: hyphenate before a noun.
 - a part-time employee
 - The employee is part time.
- Adj./noun+present participle: hyphenate regardless of position.
 - a foul-smelling liquid
 - The liquid is foul-smelling.
- Adj./noun+past participle: hyphenate regardless of position.
 - bright-eyed child
 - The child is bright-eyed.
- Compounds with adverbs ending in *-ly*: do not hyphenate.
 - delightfully sinful chocolate
- Compounds with other adverbs: hyphenate only before a noun.
 - a well-respected woman
 - a woman who is well respected
- Do not hyphenate compounds containing *almost*, *ever*, *never*, *now*, *often*, *once*, *still*, *then* or *too*.
 - a once bustling downtown, a now closed bank
- Do not hyphenate centuries used as modifiers: a 20th century man
- Do not hyphenate *American* compounds that stand alone:
 - Polish American, an African American
- Hyphenate *American* compounds when they appear before a noun:
 - a Polish-American man, an African-American story
- Compounds of three or more elements: hyphenate when they appear before a noun, regardless of what’s in *Webster’s II*.
 - up-to-date fashions, fashions that are up to date
- Do not hyphenate compound gerunds unless they are listed in *Webster’s II*:
 - speed dating
 - speed-reading (in *Webster’s*)
- Close up most words with *anti-*, *non-*, *pre-*, *pro-*, *re-* or *super-* prefixes:
 - antichoice, nonbinding, postelection, rejoin, **but**: re-elect, pre-empt

Common Errors

- *Comprised of*: The whole comprises the parts. Should be *composed of*.
 - A book comprises eight chapters. It’s composed of eight chapters.
- *Convince to*: *Convinced* doesn’t take an infinitive; *persuade* does.
 - He persuaded me to go. I’m convinced that I shouldn’t.
- *Compare to/with*: To compare something to something else is to liken it to that thing; the compare something with something else is to hold one thing up against another and note the differences.
 - The President compared his Administration to the *Titanic*.
 - The President compared his term with his predecessor’s.
- “Placing” TIME: Since TIME is international, we avoid giving readers a sense that it exists in one place, especially the U.S. or New York City. Avoid such terms as *here*, *we*, *us*, *come*, *bring* in news articles.
- *New York* for *New York City*: To avoid confusion, we prefer *New York City* for the city and *New York* for the state.
- *Last week*, *this week*, *last month*, *this month*: Beware of these time elements, since the magazine is produced with a lead time that makes it hard to know when it will be read. Use specific dates when possible.

U.S.

Anchorage
Atlanta
Austin
Baltimore
Boston
Chicago
Cincinnati
Cleveland
Colorado Springs
Dallas
Denver
Detroit
Fort Worth
Hollywood
Honolulu
Houston
Indianapolis
Las Vegas
Los Angeles
Memphis
Miami
Miami Beach
Milwaukee
Minneapolis
Nashville
New Orleans
New York City
Bronx
Brooklyn
Manhattan
Oklahoma City
Omaha
Orlando
Philadelphia
Phoenix
Pittsburgh

Sacramento
Salt Lake City
San Antonio
San Diego
San Francisco
Seattle
St. Louis
Tampa
Virginia Beach
Washington

Canada

Montreal
Ottawa
Quebec
Toronto
Vancouver

Central America & Caribbean

Acapulco
Guatemala City
Havana
Managua
Mexico City
Panama City
San Salvador
Santo Domingo

South America

Bogotá
Brasília
Buenos Aires
Caracas
Lima
Rio de Janeiro
São Paulo

Europe

Amsterdam
Athens
Barcelona
Belfast
Berlin
Brussels
Budapest
Copenhagen
Dublin
Edinburgh
Florence
Frankfurt
Geneva
Glasgow
the Hague
Hamburg
Helsinki
Istanbul
Lisbon
Liverpool
London
Luxembourg
Madrid
Marseilles
Milan
Moscow
Munich
Oslo
Paris
Prague
Rome
Rotterdam
St. Petersburg
Stockholm
Venice
Vienna

Warsaw
Zurich

Middle East & Maghreb

Abu Dhabi
Algiers
Amman
Ankara
Baghdad
Beirut
Cairo
Casablanca
Damascus
Dubai
Gaza
Jerusalem
Kuwait City
Mecca
Ramallah
Riyadh
Tehran
Tel Aviv
Tunis

Australia & New Zealand

Auckland
Canberra
Melbourne
Sydney

Africa

Addis Ababa
Cape Town
Johannesburg
Nairobi

Asia

Bangkok
Beijing
Hanoi
Hiroshima
Ho Chi Minh City
(Saigon)
Hong Kong
Islamabad
Jakarta
Kabul
Kandahar
Karachi
Kathmandu
Kolkata (Calcutta)
Kuala Lumpur
Kyoto
Macau
Manila
Mumbai
Nagasaki
New Delhi
Okinawa
Phnom Penh
Pyongyang
Seoul
Shanghai
Singapore
Taipei
Tokyo

U.S.

Ala.	Ky.	N.Y.
Alaska	La.	Ohio
Ariz.	Maine	Okla.
Ark.	Md.	Ore.
Calif.	Mass.	Pa.
Colo.	Mich.	R.I.
Conn.	Minn.	S.C.
D.C.	Miss.	S.D.
Del.	Mo.	Tenn.
Fla.	Mont.	Texas
Ga.	Neb.	Utah
Hawaii	Nev.	Va.
Idaho	N.C.	Vt.
Ill.	N.D.	Wash.
Ind.	N.H.	Wis.
Iowa	N.J.	W.Va.
Kans.	N.M.	Wyo.

Other U.S.

A.S. (American Samoa)
Guam
P.R. (Puerto Rico)
USVI (U.S. Virgin Islands)

Canada

Alta. (Alberta)
B.C. (British Columbia)
Man. (Manitoba)
N.B. (New Brunswick)
Nfld. (Newfoundland)
N.S. (Nova Scotia)
Nunavut
NWT (Northwest Territories)
Ont. (Ontario)
PEI (Prince Edward Island)
Que. (Quebec)
Sask. (Saskatchewan)
Yukon

About This Guide

A Deliberately Oversimplified Guide to Style is intended to give users a basic and functional understanding of TIME style. It is not intended to serve as a replacement for the more exhaustive TIME stylebook or the Word List, both of which are linked to on the TIME magazine intranet page. Please contact the copy desk with any questions: copydesk@timemagazine.com or ext. 23765 (v5, 10/12)

