

San Jacinto College Editorial Style Guide

The San Jacinto College marketing department publishes this Editorial Style Guide in an effort to provide consistency among members of our own department, and among departments throughout the College. It is also intended to advise all College members of the rules applied when editing copy submitted to the marketing office for printing.

As a rule, the San Jacinto College marketing department follows the “Associated Press (AP) Stylebook” guidelines. This style was selected because the AP style aims at a general audience with a tone that is neither too elite nor too common. As with any organization, there are certain language conventions that are specific to San Jacinto College so we have created a single document containing the exceptions to the AP style in an effort to enable every department on every campus to consistently represent the College. In some cases, the exact rule from the AP Stylebook is provided due to usage, and is marked with an asterisk (*).

As the guide was developed, it also became clear that many grammatical issues arise every day and that a quick reference to these would be helpful. For answers to other questions of style and spelling, the San Jacinto College marketing department consults the “Associated Press Stylebook” and “Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary.”

You are encouraged to become familiar with this Editorial Style Guide and to apply its rules to any text you write on behalf of the College. Please contact the marketing department with your comments or any matters you feel should be addressed in future editions.

A

abbreviations

Avoid abbreviations in running text.

professor Smith, not *Prof. Smith*

Use abbreviations and ampersands (&) when they are included in running text and part of a formal name.

Robbins, Schwartz, Nicholas, Lifton & Taylor, Ltd.
Sears, Roebuck and Co.

Avoid using abbreviations for an organization's name unless the agency or organization is known by its abbreviation: *FBI, CIA, FCC*. Do not use abbreviations or acronyms that the reader does not quickly recognize.

* academic degrees

If mention of degrees is necessary to establish someone's credentials, the preferred form is to avoid an abbreviation and use instead a phrase such as: *John Jones, who has a doctorate in psychology*.

Use an apostrophe in *bachelor's degree, a master's*, etc., but there is no possessive in *Bachelor of Arts* or *Master of Science*.

Also: *an associate degree (no possessive)*

Use such abbreviations as B.A., M.A., LL.D. and Ph.D. only when the need to identify many individuals by degree on first reference would make the preferred form cumbersome. Use the abbreviations only after a full name – never after just a last name.

When used after a name, an academic abbreviation is set off by commas: *John Snow, Ph.D., spoke*.

Do not precede a name with a courtesy title for an academic degree and follow it with the abbreviation for the degree in the same reference:

Wrong: Dr. Pam Jones, Ph.D.

Right: Dr. Pam Jones, a chemist

* This section is a direct quote from the AP Stylebook, 2009, published by Basic Books, page 3

* academic departments

Use lowercase except for words that are proper nouns or adjectives or part of a formal name: *the department of history, the history department, the department of English, the English department*, or when department is part of the official and formal name: *San Jacinto College Department of Theater and Film*. However, always capitalize *English* when referring to *the English department*.

* This section is a direct quote from the AP Stylebook, 2009, published by Basic Books, page 3

* academic titles

Capitalize and spell out formal titles such as *chancellor, chairman*, etc., when they precede a name.

Lowercase in all other uses. Lowercase modifiers such as *department* in *department Chairman Jerome Wiesner*.

Chancellor Dr. Brenda Hellyer
Dr. Brenda Hellyer, chancellor, spoke.
Joanna Zimmerman, dean of student life, offered remarks.
Head Coach Scott Gernander won the award.
Dr. Maureen Murphy, South campus president, cheered for the team.

* This section is a direct quote from the AP Stylebook, 2009, published by Basic Books, page 3

acronyms See abbreviations and acronyms.

*** ACT**

Use only the initials in referring to the previously designated *American College Testing*.

* This section is a direct quote from AP Stylebook, 2009, published by Basic Books, page 4

addresses

Abbreviate *Ave.*, *Blvd.* and *St.* when they are used with a numbered address: *1250 Maple St.* Spell them out and capitalize when they are used with a street name but no number: *Maple Street*. Lowercase and spell out when used with more than one street name and no numbers: *Maple and Oak streets*. All other words such as alley, drive, road, etc., are spelled out.

Always use figures for an address number: *1200 W. Algonquin Road*.

Spell out *First* through *Ninth* when used as street names; use figures for *10th* and above:
135 First St., *1010 31st Ave.*

Abbreviate compass directions in street addresses: *650 E. Fifth Street*, *700 N. Palatine Road*.

Addresses in running copy are separated by commas: *San Jacinto College, 4624 Fairmont Parkway, Pasadena, TX 77504*. When listing mailing addresses, use the two letter postal abbreviation. Use ZIP code plus 4 digits when possible.

Use official names of offices: *Registrar's Office*, *Human Resources Department*, etc., in mailing addresses.

advisor

Use advisor with the *-or* ending on all references.

affect, effect

Affect (verb), to influence; Avoid the usage of *affect* as a noun.
The game will affect the score.

Effect (verb) means to cause; (noun) means result.
She will effect changes in the company.
The effect was clear.

* African-American

Acceptable for an American black person of African descent. *Black* is also acceptable. The terms are not necessarily interchangeable. People from Caribbean nations, for example, generally refer to themselves as *Caribbean-American*. Follow a person's preference. See **nationalities and races and race**.

* This section is a direct quote from AP Stylebook, 2009, published by Basic Books, pages 6-7

ages

Use figures for ages. *He is 6 years old.*

Hyphenate ages when they are used as adjectives before a noun. *A 10-year-old girl*, but *the girl is 10 years old.*

all right Never *alright*.

alumnus, alumni, alumna, alumnae

Alumnus is the singular form for a man who has attended a school; *alumni* (plural). *Alumna* is the singular for a woman who has attended a school; *alumnae* (plural). Use *alumni* when referring to group of men and women.

a.m.

p.m.

Lowercase, with periods: *3 a.m.*, *4 p.m.* Avoid *2 p.m. this afternoon*, *12 noon* and *12 midnight*.

See **time**.

ampersand (&)

Use only when part of a company's formal name: *Robbins, Schwartz, Nicholas, Lifton & Taylor, Ltd.* Do not use in place of *and*.

Annual Fund

apostrophes (')

Do not use apostrophes when using plurals for dates and abbreviations: 1990s, 1880s, Ph.D.s, B.A.s, 20s, VIPs, ABCs

Use apostrophes for single letters: *He received three A's on his report card.* Do not put quotes around grades. *A's, B's, C's.*

See **academic degrees, capitalization and grades**.

* Asian-American

A person of Asian birth or descent who lives in the U.S. When possible, refer to a person's country of origin. For example: *Filipino-American* or *Indiana-American*. Follow the person's preference.

See **nationalities and race** and **race**.

* This section is a direct quote from AP Stylebook, 2009, published by Basic Books, page 21

B

benefiting

black

Acceptable for a person of the black race. *African-American* is acceptable for an American black person of African descent. See **African-American**, **colored**, **nationalities**, and **race**.

Board of Trustees

Capitalize when referring to San Jacinto College's *Board of Trustees*.

Do not capitalize *board* or *trustees* when they are used alone or in second reference.

The board members voted. The trustees were appointed.

Note: When referring to boards of trustees besides San Jacinto College, lowercase on all references.

* **building**

Never abbreviate. Capitalize the proper names of buildings, including the word *building* if it is an integral part of the proper name: *the Empire Stat Building*.

* This section is a direct quote from AP Stylebook, 2009, published by Basic Books, page 39

C

Campus

Capitalize when used with a formal name. *San Jacinto College North Campus*, *San Jacinto College Central Campus*, *San Jacinto College South Campus*.

Lowercase on all other occasions.

capitalization

In general, capitalize official names; unofficial, informal or general names are not capitalized such as *the center, the theater, the building*.

Center for Multicultural Learning, the center
Journalism Lab, the lab
Administration Building, the building

Capitalize course titles, except for articles, prepositions and conjunctions. Do not use ampersands in course titles.

PLS 105 Family Law
PED 179 Judo and Self-Defense/Advanced
MUS 101 Fundamentals of Music Theory

Professor Smith is teaching Fundamentals of Music Theory in the fall.

Capitalize grade letters. Do not put quotation marks around grades.

A, B, C, D, F, H, P, W, X

A grade of C or better is required to pass this course.

See **academic degrees, academic departments, academic titles, addresses, apostrophes, course titles, seasons.**

chair

Use chair instead of chairman, chairwoman or chairperson.

He is the chair of the history department.
Ms. Marie Flickinger, San Jacinto College board chair.

child care (two words)

College

Capitalize *College* on second reference when referring to San Jacinto College.
San Jacinto College is located in Pasadena. The College offers many programs.

See **San Jacinto College.**

commas

Use commas to separate items in a series, and place a comma before a conjunction: (Yes, this rule changes on a regular basis and we are back to placing commas before the conjunction.)

The ball is yellow, red, and green. Do you want pickles, tomatoes, or lettuce on your sandwich?

Commas always go inside quotation marks:

“The dog is over here,” he said. “I am 10 years old,” she said.

Separate names and titles with commas if they follow the name:

John Smith, Ph.D.,

John Smith, professor of mathematics,

Do not use commas to separate *Jr.* and *Sr.* from a name.

Martin Luther King Jr.

Bob Smith Sr.

Use commas in figures greater than 999: *1,234*. Exceptions are: street addresses: *7500 North Cook St.*, room numbers, telephone numbers and years: *1998*.

Commencement, commencement

Capitalize when referring to *San Jacinto College Commencement*. Lowercase when referring to *formal commencement exercises*.

composition titles

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

Capitalize an article – *the, a, an* – or words of fewer than four letters if it is the first or last word in a title.

Put quotation marks around the names of all such works except the Bible and books that are primarily catalogs of reference material. In addition to catalogs, this category includes almanacs, directories, dictionaries, encyclopedias, gazetteers, handbooks and similar publications, as well as television shows and theater productions. Do not use quotation marks around such software titles as WordPerfect or Windows.

“The Star-Spangled Banner”

“Gone With the Wind”

“Of Mice and Men”

“Today”

the “CBS Evening News”

“The South Belt-Ellington Leader”

Co-sponsor (Hyphen)

course titles

Capitalize all words in a title, except lowercase articles (*a, an, the*), conjunctions (*and, but, or, for, nor*) and prepositions regardless of length.

See **capitalization**.

course schedule (two words)

Lowercase, and use to refer to continuing and professional development and credit course schedules.

course work (two words)**credit hours**

Use numerals to refer to credit hours (no hyphens).

3 credit hours

She is enrolled in a 4 credit hour course.

current, currently

Avoid use of *current* and *currently* because it is redundant.

Incorrect: *He is currently working at the college.*

Correct: *He is working at the college.*

D

dashes

Use em dashes (—) to set off phrases where something more than a comma is needed. Do not use spaces between the em dashes.

Correct: *San Jacinto College—named after the area—is located in East Harris County.*

Incorrect: *San Jacinto College—named after the area, is located in East Harris County.*

Use en dashes (-) for ranges in years, page numbers, times, etc., with no spaces between the dashes.

Examples: *2002-03, 1998-99* (do not repeat the year on second reference for ranges),
pages 125-258, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

database (one word)**dates**

Time, date, place should always be in the following order:

at 6 p.m., Friday, in the theater

at 10 a.m., Tuesday, April 1, in the Interactive Learning Center

Use the year with the month only if the date does not fall in the current year.

Do not use endings *-st, -nd, -rd, -th* with dates
April 1 event, not April 1st event

Use a comma before and after the year if a month and date appear with it: *December 31, 2003*. Do not use a comma between the month and year when it stands alone: *December 2003*.

Decades may be referred to as: the *1980s*, the *1990s*, etc. Do not use an apostrophe. Use numerals.

days of the week

Do not abbreviate. Capitalize them.

degrees See academic degrees

department names See academic departments

disabled, handicapped, impaired

Do not use *disabled* or *handicapped* to describe a person. Avoid *mentally challenged* and other descriptions that may evoke pity. Instead use *people with disabilities*.

dollars

Always lowercase. Use figures and the dollar sign (\$) in all casual references or amounts without a figure.

Tuition costs \$38 per credit hour.

He donated \$600,000.

She paid \$36.95 for a book.

The building costs \$88 million.

Do not use *\$36.00*. Leave off the zeros.

E

ellipsis (...)

Use an ellipsis to show deletion of one or more words in sentences or quotes. Leave one space on both sides of the ellipsis: *The car ... is on the bridge*. If the sentence ends with an ellipsis, leave the period that would have ended the sentence....

email

Lowercase *email*. Hyphenate and lowercase *e-commerce, e-business, e-shopping*.

San Jacinto College email addresses should be lowercase: john.smith@sjcd.edu

Avoid breaking email addresses in a line of text.

Equal Employment Opportunity statement

The San Jacinto College District is committed to equal employment opportunity for all employees and applicants without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, citizenship status, age, disability, pregnancy, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, genetic information, marital status, or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. No person including students, faculty, staff, part-time, and temporary workers will be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination or harassment under any program or activity sponsored or conducted by the San Jacinto College District on the basis of the categories listed.

F

Fall See **seasons**.

fax (lowercase)

foreign students

International students is preferred.

freshman, freshmen

Freshmen is plural, but use *freshman* when referring to *freshman courses*, *freshman year*, *freshman class*. Avoid confusion by using *first year students*.

full time, full-time

Hyphenate as an adjective before the noun. Otherwise use two words. *She works full time. He has a full-time job.*

fundraise, fundraiser, fundraising (one word)

G

grade point average (GPA)

grades

Always capitalize. Do not put quotes around grades.

You must earn a C to complete the course.

See **apostrophes** and **capitalization**.

graduation

Lowercase on all references.

See **Commencement**.

H

health care (two words)

* **Hispanic**

A person from – or whose ancestors were from – a Spanish-speaking land or culture. *Latino* an *Latina* are sometimes preferred. Follow the person's preference. Use a more specific identification when possible, such as *Cuban*, *Puerto Rico*, or *Mexican-American*. See **Latino, nationalities and races, and race**.

* This section is a direct quote from AP Stylebook, 2009, published by Basic Books, page 131

hyphens

Hyphens are joiners. Use them to form a single idea with two or more words.

In general do not hyphenate words that begin with the prefixes, *after*, *anti*, *bi*, *by*, *co*, *ex*, *full*, *in*, *non*, *pre*, *post*, *re*, *semi* and *un* unless the prefix ending is a vowel and the other word begins with the same vowel: *re-elect*, *pre-election*, *co-op*.

Always hyphenate *self*: *self-government*.

Hyphenate words with prefixes when they are used in front of a formal name: anti-American, post-Renaissance.

When in doubt look up the word in Webster's New World College Dictionary to determine if it is hyphenated.

I

*****Internet Guide*****

Some commonly used Internet, computer and telecommunication terms:

CD-ROM

All caps when referring to a *compact disc* acting as a *read-only memory*.
CD-ROM disc is redundant.

cell phone (two words)

database (one word)

double-click

download (To copy a file from one computer to another.)

DVD

Capitalize and use on all references. *DVD* is an acronym for *digital video disk*.

email

Lowercase *email*. Hyphenate and lowercase *e-commerce*, *e-business*, *e-shopping*.

San Jacinto College email addresses should be lowercase: john.smith@sjcd.edu

Avoid breaking email addresses in a line of text.

FAQ

Capitalize and use on all references on the Web. Acronym for *frequently asked questions*. Spell it out in running text.

home page (two words)

The front page of a website.

Internet

Capitalize. On second reference, can refer to *the Net*.

intranet**IT**

Acronym for *information technology*. Spell it out and lowercase on first reference. On second reference, use IT (capitalized).

LAN

Acronym for *local area network*. On first reference, spell it out. Use *LAN* on second reference.

laptop**login, logon, logoff**

Use as two words in verb form: *I log in to my computer*.

MP3

offline (no hyphen)

online (no hyphen, one word)

screen saver (two words)

URL

The *URL* is the Internet address. Avoid breaking an Internet address in text. When the address does not fit on a line, then break it into two or more lines without adding a hyphen.

Wi-Fi

international students

International students is preferred to *foreign students*.

J

junior, senior

Abbreviate as *Jr.* and *Sr.* only with full names. Do not use a comma: *Martin Luther King Jr.*

L

Latina, Latino

Latina, Latino is preferred to *Hispanic*. Follow the person's preference.

M

Master of Arts, Master of Science

Master's degree or a *master's* is acceptable in any reference.

midnight/noon

Do not put "12" in front of either one. When referring to a time, it is preferable to use 12 p.m., or 12 a.m.

See **time**.

*** months**

Capitalize the names of months in all uses. When a specific month is used with a specific date, abbreviate only *Jan.*, *Feb.*, *Aug.*, *Sept.*, *Oct.*, *Nov.* and *Dec.* Spell out when using alone, or with a year alone.

When a phrase lists only a month and a year, do not separate the year with commas. When a phrase refers to a month, day and year, set off the year with commas.

January 1972 was a cold month.

Jan. 2 was the coldest day of the month.

His birthday is May 8.

Feb. 14, 1987 was the target date.

She testified that it was Friday, Dec. 3, when the accident occurred.

In tabular material, use the three-letter forms without a period: *Jan*, *Feb*, *Mar*, *Apr*, *May*, *Jun*, *Jul*, *Aug*, *Sep*, *Oct*, *Nov*, *Dec*.

See **dates and years**.

* This section is a direct quote from AP Stylebook, 2009, published by Basic Books, page 181

more than, over

Use *more than* when referring to numerals: *More than 50 people came to the party. Their salaries increased more than 2 percent.* Use *over* to refer to spatial relationships: *The plane flew over the house.*

multicultural (No hyphen, one word.)

N

Native American

American Indian also is acceptable.

noncredit (one word)

nonprofit (one word)

numerals, numbers

Spell out one through nine. Use numerals for 10 and above.

They have six children. There are 10 people in the family.

Do not start a sentence with a number.

Incorrect: *60 students were in the class.*

Correct: *There were 60 students in the class. Sixty students were in the class.*

A sentence may start with a year.

1978 was a great year.

For ordinals, spell out first through ninth when they indicate sequence in time or location: *first base, First Amendment*. Use numerals for 10th and above.

O

on campus, on-campus

Two words. Hyphenate as an adjective before a noun.

I work on campus.

She has an on-campus job.

online (one word)

ordinal numbers

See **numerals**.

P

part time, part-time

Hyphenate when used as an adjective before a noun.

I work part time. She has a part-time job.

percent

One word. Spell out percent in all references. Use a numeral before percent except when starting a sentence with a numeral, then spell out the number such as: *Twelve percent of the people attended the open house.*

Correct: *10 percent; 2.65 percent*

Incorrect: 8 %; 2.5 per cent

Phi Theta Kappa

Capitalize. Use when referring to the international honor society of two-year colleges established in 1918.

Ph.D., Ph.D.s

It is preferred to say the person *holds a doctorate* and name the area of specialty.

phone numbers See **telephone numbers**.

professor

Do not abbreviate. Lowercase before a name unless starting a sentence with professor. Capitalize Professor Emeritus as a title before a name.

R

*** room numbers**

Use figures and capitalize *room* when used with a figure: *Room 2, Room 211*.

* This section is a direct quote from AP Stylebook, 2009, published by Basic Books, page 245

*** rooms**

Capitalize the names of specialty designated rooms: *Blue Room, Lincoln Room, Oval Office, Persian Room*.

* This section is a direct quote from AP Stylebook, 2009, published by Basic Books, page 245

S

San Jacinto College

Use *San Jacinto College* on all first references. On second reference use *the College*. Capitalize *College* on second reference when referring to San Jacinto College. For official or legal documents, the College must be referred to as *San Jacinto Community College District*.

See **College**.

San Jacinto College Foundation

Capitalize *Foundation* on second reference when referring to the *San Jacinto College Foundation*.

seasons

Capitalize *Spring*, *Summer*, and *Fall* when referring to an academic term. Lowercase when referring to the season fall, spring, summer, winter.

semester

Lowercase except at the start of a sentence.

Spring semester, Fall semester, Summer session

spacing

In writing, especially for news releases and all printed materials, use one space after a period at the end of a sentence instead of two spaces as in the English grammar style.

Spring See **seasons**.

state

Lowercase in all *state of* constructions: *the state of Texas, the states of Texas and Oklahoma*. Do not capitalize *state* when used as an adjective to specify a level of jurisdiction: *state Rep. Ken Legler, state funds*.

state names

Spell out states when they are used alone in text. Abbreviate states when used with the name of a city, town, village, etc.

Use the following state abbreviations in text. (ZIP code abbreviations are in parentheses and only should be used with complete addresses.) These abbreviations come from the standards used by the *Associated Press Stylebook*.

Ala. (AL)	Md. (MD)	N.D. (ND)
Ariz. (AZ)	Mass. (MA)	Okla. (OK)
Ark. (AR)	Mich. (MI)	Ore. (OR)
Calif. (CA)	Minn. (MN)	Pa. (PA)
Colo. (CO)	Miss. (MS)	R.I. (RI)
Conn. (CT)	Mo. (MO)	S.C. (SC)
Del. (DE)	Mont. (MT)	S.D. (SD)
Fla. (FL)	Neb. (NE)	Tenn. (TN)
Ga. (GA)	Nev. (NV)	Vt. (VT)
Ill. (IL)	N.H. (NH)	Va. (VA)
Ind. (IN)	N.J. (NJ)	Wash. (WA)
Kan. (KS)	N.M. (NM)	W.Va. (WV)
Ky. (KY)	N.Y. (NY)	Wis. (WI)
La. (LA)	N.C. (NC)	Wyo. (WY)

Eight states are never abbreviated in datelines or text: *Alaska (AK), Hawaii (HI), Idaho (ID), Iowa (IA), Maine (ME), Ohio (OH), Texas (TX), and Utah (UT).*

See **addresses**.

Summer See **seasons**.

T

telephone numbers

Use figures and dashes, not periods. *281-998-6150*. If extension numbers are needed, use a comma to separate the main number from the extension: *281-998-6150, ext. 0000*.

television program titles

See **composition titles**.

theater

Use this spelling with the ending *-er* for all uses except when referring to a proper name of a Theatre: *Theatre San Jacinto*.

time

Do not use *:00* with times: *7 to 8 a.m., 8 to 9 a.m., 6:30 p.m.*

Lowercase a.m. and p.m. See **a.m.** and **p.m.**

Do not use *o'clock* with times.

It is preferable to use 12 p.m. and 12 a.m. instead of *noon* or *midnight*.

Only use from with to:

Correct: *from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m.*

Incorrect: *from 9-10 a.m.*

Avoid redundancies such as *10 a.m. this morning*, or *10 p.m. Monday night*.

See **dates**, **midnight/noon**.

toward Not *towards*.

T-shirt

U

under way (two words)

upward Not *upwards*.

* **U.S.**

The abbreviation is acceptable as a noun or adjective for *United States*. In headlines, it's *US* (no periods).

* This section is a direct quote from AP Stylebook, 2009, published by Basic Books, page 286

* **USA**

No periods in the abbreviated form for United States of America.

* This section is a direct quote from AP Stylebook, 2009, published by Basic Books, page 286

V

vice president, vice chancellor

See **academic titles**.

W

Web

Short form of *World Wide Web*. The *Web* is not the same as the Internet, but is a subset.

website (one word, lowercase)

weekend (no hyphen)

weeklong (no hyphen)

well-being

winter See **seasons**.

withdrawal

workforce (one word)

workplace

World Wide Web

Three words, no hyphens. On second reference, *the Web*. Preference is to use website.

www.sanjac.edu

Omit `http://` on all URLs for the College's website.

X

X-ray

Y

years

Use figures, without commas: *1995*.

Use commas only with a month and day: *Dec. 19, 1994*, was a special day.

Add no apostrophes when plural: *1990s, 1970s, 1950s*.

See **dates**.

Z

* **ZIP code**

Use all-caps *ZIP* for *Zoning Improvement Plan*, but always lowercase the word *code*.

Run the five digits together without a comma, and do not put a comma between the state name and the ZIP code: *New York, NY 10020*.

* This section is a direct quote from AP Stylebook, 2009, published by Basic Books, page 308

See **addresses**.