Most publications adhere to rules of style to avoid inconsistencies. The Collegian and The Collegian Online use Associated Press (AP) style. The following contains the AP rules used most frequently.

Abbreviations

Punctuation of abbreviations

- As a general rule, use only commonly recognized abbreviations.
- Abbreviations of two letters or fewer usually take periods: 600 B.C., A.D. 200, 8 a.m., 7 p.m., U.N., U.S., 815 Pine St.
- Generally, abbreviations of three letters or more do not use periods: CIA, FBI, NATO, mpg, mph.

Symbols

- Always write out % as percent in a story, but you may use the symbol in a headline.
- Write out & as and unless it is part of a company's formal name.
- Always write out ¢ as cent or cents.
- Always use the symbol $ rather than the word dollar with any figure, and put the symbol before the figure. Write out dollar only if you are speaking of something like the “value of the dollar on the world market.”

Dates

- Never abbreviate the days of the week.
- Don't abbreviate a month unless it is part of a specific date: August, August 2008, but Aug. 25, Aug. 25, 2008.
- The five months spelled with five letters or fewer are never abbreviated: March, April 24, May 12, 2009, June 2008, July of that year.
- Never abbreviate Christmas as Xmas, even in a headline.
- Fourth of July is written out.

People and titles

- In general, The Collegian does not use courtesy titles (Mr., Mrs., Ms., Miss), but courtesy titles should be retained when part of a direct quotation. For example, “Mrs. Jones is not a suspect,” the campus police chief said.
- The abbreviations Gov., Lt. Gov., Rep., Sen., the Rev. are used before a name on first reference. Certain military titles also follow this pattern. (See AP Stylebook for a listing.) The title is dropped on subsequent references. The following titles are not abbreviated before a name: Attorney General, District Attorney, President, Professor and Superintendent.
- The abbreviations Jr. and Sr. are used after a name on first reference and are not set off by commas.

Organizations

- The first reference for most organizations is written out in full rather than abbreviated: National Organization for Women. For CIA, FBI and GOP, however, the abbreviation may be used on first reference.
- Well-known abbreviations such as FCC and NOW may be used in headlines but are not acceptable on first reference in copy.
- Do not put the abbreviation of an organization in parentheses after the full name on first reference.
- If an organization's abbreviation is confusing, use a generic reference: the gay rights group or the bureau on second reference.
- Political affiliations are abbreviated after a name: Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., said ... (Note the use of a single letter without a period for the party and the use of commas before and after the party and state.)
**Places**

- Don’t abbreviate a state name unless it follows the name of a city in that state: *California*, but *Fresno, Calif.*
- The following eight states are never abbreviated: *Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas, Utah.*
- Use traditional abbreviations for states – not the two-letter postal abbreviations: *Calif.*, not *CA*. Below are the traditional abbreviations of states:
  
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  Ariz. | Ky. | N.H. | S.D. |
  Ark. | La. | N.J. | Tenn. |
  Calif. | Md. | N.M. | Vt. |
  Ind. | Neb. | N.J. |

- On first reference, a U.S. city or town is usually followed by the abbreviation of its state: *She moved to Bend, Ore., when she was 10.* (Note commas before and after the state.) Some cities are so well-known that they are used without the name of their state: *Denver, Boston, Chicago.* (See AP Stylebook under “datelines” for complete list.)
- The names of streets are not abbreviated if there is no street address with them: *Huntington Boulevard, Main Street, First Avenue.*
- If the name of a street has the words *street, avenue, boulevard* or compass points, such as *north or southeast,* those words are abbreviated in a street address: *1044 W. Maple St., 1424 Lee Blvd. S., 999 Jackson Ave.*
- In a highway’s name, U.S. is always abbreviated: *U.S. Highway 1.* For an interstate highway, the name is written in full on first reference, abbreviated on subsequent ones: *Interstate 5* (first reference), *I-5* (second reference).
- *Fort* and *Mount* are never abbreviated. The abbreviation *St.* for *Saint* is always used in place names, with the exception of *Saint John* in New Brunswick, *St. Genevieve* in Missouri and *Sault Ste. Marie* in Michigan and Ontario.
- Abbreviate *United States* and *United Nations* as *U.S.* and *U.N.* when used as adjectives or nouns.

**Miscellaneous:**

- **IQ:** No periods and acceptable in all references to intelligence quotient.
- **No. 1, No. 2, etc.:** Abbreviate and capitalize the word *number* when followed by a numeral.
- **TV:** No periods. Do not use except in headlines, as adjectives (*TV viewing*), or in constructions such as *cable TV.*
- **UFO:** Acceptable in all references to an unidentified flying object.
- **vs.:** Use lowercase letters, and don’t abbreviate as *v.*

**Capitalization**

1. **General rule:** Proper nouns are capitalized; common nouns are not.
   - With animals, food and plants, capitalize only the parts of a compound name that would be capitalized by themselves: *German shepherd, Boston cream pie, Dutch elm.* Exceptions: *brussels sprouts, french fries, graham crackers, manhattan cocktail.*

2. **Widely known regions are capitalized, but directions are not:**
   - *We had always wanted to go out West but He lives on the west side of town.*
   - Adjectives and nouns pertaining to a widely known regions are capitalized: *Southern accent, Western movie, Southern California, the Bay Area, East Los Angeles.*

3. **When two or more proper nouns are combined to share a plural word in common, the shared plural is lowercase:**
   - *The San Joaquin and Fresno rivers.*

4. **College and governmental terms are not always consistent:**
   - Departments. College departments follow the “animal, food and plant rules.” Capitalize only words that are already proper nouns: *Spanish department, sociology department.* A specific department of government is always capitalized, even without the city, state or federal designator: *Fire Department, Department of State.*
   - Committees. College and governmental committees are capitalized if the formal name is given rather than a shorter, descriptive designation: *Alcohol Advisory Committee, but the alcohol committee.*
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College and governmental terms are now always consistent, continued:
• Degrees. Academic degrees are spelled out and lowercase: bachelor of arts degree, master’s degree. Avoid the abbreviations Ph.D., M.A., B.A., etc., except in lists. (Note the apostrophe in bachelor’s degree and master’s degree.)
• Always capitalize (unless plural or generic): City Council, County Commission (but alone, council and commission are lowercase). Legislature is capitalized if the state’s body is formally named that. Capitol, in reference to a building, is always capitalized, but capital, meaning a city, is not.
• Never capitalize generic references such as: board of directors, board of trustees. Also, federal, government and administration are not capitalized unless part of a formal name: Federal Bureau of Investigation. President and vice president are capitalized only before a name.
• Military titles (Sgt., Maj., Gen.) before a name are capitalized, as are Air Force, Army, Marines and Navy if referring to U.S. forces.
• Political parties are capitalized, including the word party: Democratic Party, Republican Party. Capitalize words like communist, democratic, fascist and socialist only if they refer to a formal party, not a philosophy.

5. Religion:
• Lowercase pope unless before a name, but Mass is always uppercase. Pronouns for God or Jesus are lowercase: We worship him.
• Bible is capitalized if meaning the Holy Scriptures, but it is lowercase when referring to another book: The Collegian’s layout binder is call “the bible.”

6. Races. Names of races and ethnicities are capitalized, but color descriptions are not:
• Caucasian, African-American, but white, black.

7. Formal titles of people are capitalized before a name, but occupational titles are not:
• President John Welty, but astronaut Mary Gardner, actor Tom Hanks. Some titles are not easy to distinguish from occupational titles: advertising manager, chief executive officer. When in doubt, put the title after the name, set off with commas and use lowercase.

Numerals

1. Cardinal numbers (numerals) are used in:
• Addresses. Always use numerals for street addresses: 1322 N. 10th St.
• Ages. Always use numerals, even for days or months: 3 days old; John Doe, 60.
• Clothes size: size 6.
• Dates. Always use the numeral alone; do not use –nd, –rd, –st or –th after a numeral: July 1, not July 1st.
• Dimensions: 3 feet tall, 10 feet long. Note the need for hyphenation when dimensions are followed by a noun: 5-foot-6-inch guard.
• Highways: U.S. 41.
• Millions, billions and trillions: Use a numeral before the word: 1.2 million people.
• Money. Always use numerals, but starting with a million, write like this: $7 billion bailout.
• Number: No. 1, No. 2.
• Percentages. Always use numerals except at the beginning of a sentence: 3 percent, 10.5 percent.
• Recipes. Use numerals even for amounts below 10: 2 cups.
• Speeds: 65 mph, 10 knots.
• Sports: Use numerals in expressions like the following: a score of 24-21, a gain of 2 yards, a vault of 17 feet, 6 inches.
• Temperatures. All are numerals except zero. For below zero, spell out minus: minus 6, not -6 (except in tabular data).
• Time: 10 a.m., 6:32 p.m., but noon, midnight, five minutes, three hours.
• Weights: 7 pounds, 11 ounces.
• Years. Use numerals without commas: A date is the only numeral that may be used to start a sentence: 2005 was a good year.

2. Numerals with the suffixes -rd, -nd, -st, and -th (ordinals) are used for:
• Political divisions (precincts, wards, districts): 3rd Congressional District.
• Military references: 1st Lt., 2nd Division, 7th Fleet.
• Courts: 10th Circuit Court of Appeals.
• Street identifications: Spell out First through Ninth, then use figures: 123 Ninth, 123 - 10th Ave.
• Amendments to the Constitution after Ninth. For First through Ninth, use words.
3. Words are used instead of numerals for:
   • Numbers of less than 10 (Note exceptions previously cited).
   • Any number at the start of a sentence except for a year, but do not open a sentence with a lengthy spelled-out number. Instead, revise the opening: A total of 10,342 tickets were sold.
   • Casual numbers: about a hundred or so.
   • Fractions less than one: one-half.

4. Numerals are used for fractions greater than one:
   • 1 1/2.

5. Roman numerals are used for a person who is the third or later in a family to bear a name and for a king, queen, pope or world war:
   • John D. Rockefeller III, Queen Elizabeth II, World War II.

Other Common AP Rules

1. Semicolon. Use a semicolon to clarify items of a series that contain internal commas: Parts for the printer are made in Tampa, Fla.; Austin, Texas; and Los Angeles, Calif. (Note the semicolon before the conjunction and.)

2. “More than” vs. “over.” The word over generally refers to spatial relationships: The plane flew over the university. More than is preferred with numerals: The hourly wage increased by more than $3.”

3. Compound adjective. Use hyphens to link all the words in a compound adjective that precedes a noun: The five-volume report was overwhelming. Do not use a hyphen if the word construction includes very or an adverb ending in -ly: a very big project, highly legal procedures.

4. Dash. Put a space on both sides of a dash in all uses. (Learn the difference between the functions of a hyphen and a dash. Also, learn how to enter a dash on your keyboard.)

5. Don’t forget this: It’s website, e-mail and ZIP code.