Associated Press Style Quick Reference Guide

AP style is all about consistency, clarity, accuracy and brevity.

Style	Rule
Abbreviations	● Abbreviate junior or senior directly after a name, with no comma to set it off: Justin Wilson Jr. ● Spell out the names of all states when used alone: "He lives in Montana." Abbreviate state names of seven or more letters when used with a city name, with commas before and after the abbreviation: "Pittsburgh, Pa., is a great weekend getaway spot for people who live in Youngstown, Ohio." ● Use abbreviations for degrees only when you need to include a list of credentials after a name; set them off with commas. ● Spell out the name of a month when it is used without a specific date: "August is too hot for a visit to Florida." ● Abbreviate months with six or more letters if they are used with a specific date: Sept. 28. Always spell out those with five or fewer letters: May 15. ● In writing stories, never abbreviate: Tthe days of the week; percent as %; or cents as ¢.
Academic degrees	● Use an apostrophe and spell out academic degrees
Acronyms	● Don't use them ● If you do, spell them out on first mention. On subsequent mentions, use generic terms such as the board, the division, etc. ● Don't put acronyms in parentheses after the first reference
Addresses	● Spell out all generic parts of street names (avenue, north, road) when no specific address is given. ● When a specific address is used, abbreviate avenue (Ave.), boulevard (Blvd.), street (St.) and directional parts of street names. Exception: Drive
Capitalization	● The AP Stylebook uses what's known as downstyle; that is, words are lowercased unless a rule says to capitalize them. ● Capitalize common nouns such as party, river and street only when they are part of a proper name. ● Capitalize the word room when used with the number of the room or when part of the name of a specially designated room. ● Lowercase directional indicators except when they refer to specific geographic regions or popularized names for those regions. ● Capitalize formal titles that come directly before a name; Lowercase formal titles that appear on their own or follow a name. ● Never capitalize job descriptions regardless of whether they are before or after a name
Dates, days & times	● Always use Arabic figures, without st, nd, rd or th. ● When a month is used with a specific date, abbreviate Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec. ● When a phrase lists only a month and year, spell out the month and do not separate the month and the year with commas. ● When a phrase refers to a month, day and year, set off the year with commas. ● Use figures except for noon and midnight ● Use a.m. or p.m. (with periods)
Names	● Use a person's first and last name the first time he or she is mentioned. On second reference, use only last name with no title. ● Do not use courtesy titles such as Mr., Mrs., Miss or Ms. unless they are part of a direct quotation or are needed to differentiate between people who have the same last name.

Numbers	● In general, spell out numbers one through nine, and use figures for numbers 10 and higher. There are many exceptions that always take figures. Common exceptions include:
	  ○ Addresses
	  ○ Ages, but not for inanimate objects
	  ○ Cents
	  ○ Dollars. Do not include a period and two zeroes when referring to an even dollar figure.
	  ○ Dates. Dates take cardinal numbers.
	  ○ Dimensions
	  ○ Highways
	  ○ Millions, billions
	  ○ Percentages. Percent is one word.
	  ○ Speed
	  ○ Temperatures
	  ○ Times. Do not include a colon and two zeroes when referring to an even hour.
	● Spell out numbers used at the beginning of a sentence. Exception: Neverspell out years.● Use commas to set off each group of three digits in numerals higher than 999 (except for years and addresses)
	● Use decimals (up to two places) for amounts in the millions and billions that do not require a precise figure.
	● Add an s but no apostrophe to a number to make it plural. The same rule applies to decades. Use an apostrophe on a decade only if cutting off the initial figures.
	● Use hyphens for phone numbers

Punctuation, quotation	**Apostrophe** For plural nouns ending in s, add only an apostrophe. For singular common nouns ending in s, add 's For singular proper names ending in s, use only an apostrophe: For singular proper names ending in s sounds such as x, ce, and z, use 's For plurals of a single letter, add 's Do not use 's for plurals of numbers or multiple letter combinations **Bullets** Associated Press style is to use dashes, not bullets, for lists that follow a colon. Wet prefers bullet, but punctuate them per AP style: After each bullet, capitalize the first letter and use periods at the end of each item. **Colon** ● Capitalize the first word after a colon only if it is a proper noun or the start of a complete sentence. ● Colons go outside quotation marks unless they are part of the quoted material. **Comma** ● Don't use a comma before a conjunction in a simple series. i.e., No Oxford comma. ● Use a comma for a series that includes elements containing and/or **Hyphen** ● Use hyphens to link all the words in a compound adjective. ● Do not use a hyphen if the construction includes very or an adverb ending in –ly **Parentheses** ● Avoid using parentheses when possible. If parentheses are required the rules are: If the parenthetical is a complete, independent sentence, place the period inside the parentheses; if not, the period goes outside. **Period** ● Use only one space after the end of a sentence. Period. **Quotation marks** ● Single quotation marks should be used only for a quote within a quote. Do not use quotation marks for word emphasis. ● The period and the comma always go within the quotation marks. ● The dash, semicolon, question mark and exclamation point go within the quotation marks when they apply to the quoted matter only. They go outside when they apply to the whole sentence. **Semicolon** ● Use a semicolon to clarify a series that includes a number of commas. Include a semicolon before the conjunction.
Titles	● These formal titles are capitalized and abbreviated as shown when used before a name both inside and outside quotations: Dr., Gov., Lt. Gov., Rep., Sen. On second reference, use the last name only. ● Generally, capitalize formal titles when they appear before a person's name ● Lowercase titles if they are informal, appear without a person's name, follow a person's name or are set off before a name by commas. ● Lowercase adjectives that designate the status of a title. ● If a title is long, place it after the person's name, orset it off with commas before the person's name. ● Abbreviate and capitalize most titles when they are used directly before a name ● Never capitalize job descriptions -- shortstop, police officer, attorney and so on. ● Titles of books, movies, recordings, television shows and similar works are set off in quotation marks, with all principal words capitalized ● Titles of magazines, newspapers and reference works get no special treatment
Technological terms	BlackBerry, download, e-book, e-book reader, e-reader, email, cellphone, Facebook, Google, googling, googled, hashtag, IM (IMed, IMing; for first reference, use instant messenger), internet, iPad, iPhone, iPod (use IPad, IPhone, or IPod when the word begins a sentence), LinkedIn, social media, smartphone, Twitter, tweet, tweeted, retweet, website, webmaster, YouTube