



(Updated March 2013)

St. John's College Editorial Style Guidelines

This style guide is for publications including *The College* magazine, e-newsletters, the college website and other official print and electronic publications; AP Style is used for press releases and other communication with the media. This style guide uses, as its basis, the *Chicago Manual of Style*, and Chicago references are included for clarity. The formal Chicago style is adapted in some cases (most noted below) to be less formal and/ or save space. Please note that letters, invitations, and other more informal uses may escape some of these conventions if the context calls for it, i.e. a fund-raising letter may refer to “the College” (often used among alumni), etc. An additional reference for usage and clarity is *The Elements of Style*, by Strunk and White.

A

Academic degrees:

Just recently Chicago reversed itself on this rule; thus, PhD, BA, MS, MD, etc. In conservative practice, periods are added to abbreviations of all academic degrees (B.A., D.D.S., etc). Chicago [15.21] now recommends omitting them unless they are required for tradition or consistency.

Acronyms, initialisms, and other abbreviations:

Refer to organizations and institutions by their full names on first reference, followed by the appropriate abbreviation in parentheses, if the article will refer to them by abbreviation later: e.g., Free the Planet (FTP), or Student Instruction Committee (SCI).

Active voice:

State clearly, directly who is doing what.

B

Board of Visitors and Governors:

Avoid the use of BVG - the preferred second reference is board.

Bhagavad-Gita:

One hyphenated word; on second reference it generally is referenced as the Gita.



The name means “Song of the Divine One”, Bhagavad meaning “the Divine One.” It is a sacred Hindu scripture. [NOTE: religious works, in keeping with Chicago guidelines, are not italicized.]

Bible:

Do not italicize it; uppercase books, Book of Job, etc. Revelation (NOT Revelations.)

Bookstore:

One word, uppercase; this is based off of common use on campus (see popular names for more).

C

College:

When referring to St. John’s College without the full name, use lowercase.

St. John’s College was founded in 1696 as King William’s School. The college was chartered in 1784.

See Chicago 8.3, Names versus generic terms. Most proper names combine a given name with a generic (or descriptive) term (Albion College, the Circuit of Lake County, President Daniel Day-Lewis). After the first mention, an official name is often replaced by the generic term alone, which (no longer strictly a proper name) may be safely lowercased.

CEFA:

Acronym for Continuing Education and Fine Arts; it is an Annapolis program offering community seminars and preceptorials, as well as fine arts classes for students and the community.

Class year:

Identify past or future St. John’s graduates by placing an abbreviation for their campus and the year of their graduation or the year in which they would have graduated (based on the date they matriculated) in parentheses. Add GI to denote Graduate Institute graduates; EC for Eastern Classics. For graduates prior to the founding of Santa Fe in 1968, one may say “class of” plus the year of graduation in parentheses. Thus:

Jo Ann Mattson (A87) raises funds.

The award went to Alexis Brown (SF01, EC05).

Jane Goodall (SFGI75)

Roseanne Barr (AGI00)



Francis Scott Key, Class of 1796
John Chase, Class of 1956

Courtesy Titles:

(Mr., Ms., Miss, Doctor,) These are generally not used, except in obituaries and personal commentary (i.e. Reminiscence about a father, etc.)

Community Seminars, Santa Fe:
Uppercase

D

Dormitories:

Dorm is acceptable on any reference; residence hall is also ok, but we have not yet insisted upon this inflated and politically correct term.

Dorms in Annapolis are: Humphreys Hall (1837), Chase-Stone House (1857), Paca Carroll House (1857), Pinkney Hall (1858), Randall Hall (1903), Campbell Hall (1954), Gilliam Hall (2004), and Spector Hall (2006). Dorms in Santa Fe are: Calliope, Clio, Euterpe, Polyhymnia, Terpsichore, Thalia, Urania, Meem, Driscoll, Murchison, Kirby, Huffman, Anderson, McCune, Wagner, Jones, Ferdinand, Ariel, Miranda, Suites 1-5, and Apartments 1-10. The suites and apartments in Santa Fe have been named for local wildflowers, but these names are not commonly used. For reference, they are: Yarrow (suite 1), Sunflower (suite 2), Aster (suite 3), Globemallow (suite 4), Blue Gamma (suite 5), Filaree (apts. 1-4), Mullein (apts. 5-7), and Gilia (apts. 8-10). The dorms in the Lower Dormitory Complex are named for the Muses of Greek mythology, the dorms in the Upper Dormitory Complex are named for prominent donors, and the dorms in the Winiarski Student Center are named for characters in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

On first reference use full name, but upon second use just the name of the hall (e.g. Randall, Campbell, Humphrey's, etc).

Don rag/Conference:

Lowercase in all references. The don rag is applicable to undergraduates: freshman through junior year. The conference is an alternative available to juniors alone.



E

Earth:

Use Chicago guidelines. In nontechnical contexts the word *earth*, in the sense of our planet, is usually lowercased when preceded by *the* or in such idioms as “down to earth” or “move heaven and earth.” When used as the proper name of our planet, especially in context with other planets, it is capitalized, and *the* usually omitted.

Eastern Classics:

Established in Santa Fe as a certificate program in 1994 and as a master’s program in 1996; many certificate program graduates were later given the option to earn the master’s. It requires three semesters and study in Sanskrit or Ancient Chinese.

Ellipsis:

Avoid them when you can; they seriously disturb flow. When you can’t avoid them, use the three- or four-dot method espoused by Chicago 11.57. Three dots indicate an omission within a quoted sentence. Four mark the omission of one or more sentences (but see 11.58). When three are used, space occurs both before the first dot and after the final dot. When four are used, the first dot is a true period- that is, there is no space between it and the preceding word. What precedes and, normally, what follows the four dots should be grammatically complete sentences as quoted, even if part of either sentence has been omitted. A complete passage from Emerson’s essay “Politics” reads:

“The spirit of our American radicalism is destructive and aimless: it is not loving, it has no ulterior and divine ends; but is destructive only out of hatred and selfishness. On the other side, the conservative party, composed of the most moderate, able, and cultivated part of the population, is timid, and merely defensive of property. It vindicates no right, it aspires to no real good, it brands no crime, it proposes no generous policy, it does not build, nor write, nor cherish the arts, nor foster religion, nor establish schools, nor encourage science, nor emancipate the slave, nor befriend the poor, or the Indian, or the immigrant. From neither party, when in power, has the world any benefit to expect in science, art, or humanity, at all commensurate with the resources of the nation.”

The passage might be shortened as follows:

“The spirit of our American radicalism is destructive and aimless.... On the other side, the conservative party ... is timid, and merely defensive of property.... It does not build, nor write, nor cherish the arts, nor foster religion, nor establish schools.”

Note that the first word after an ellipsis is capitalized if it begins a new grammatical sentence. Compare 11.63



Energieia:

A literary magazine in Annapolis; italicize title.

F

Financial Aid, office of:

See *Admissions and Financial Aid, offices of*.

Fine Arts Building:

This building is in Santa Fe. Avoid FAB acronym.

Friday night lecture:

This should be hyphenated, according to rules on compound modifiers; however, SJC chooses not to. Tradition holds that the audience rises as the speaker enters and again as the speaker leaves the stage; this tradition started due to a Virginia dean's sense of etiquette (see tutor John White's introduction to Allan Bloom's translation of Plato's *Republic*).

Febbies:

These are students who matriculate at the start of the winter semester. They are an anachronism on the Annapolis campus, the final Febbies matriculating in winter 2006, and they are not expected to return. The process still holds in Santa Fe, where they are called "January Freshman"; on second reference "JF" as long as the context is clear.

Fundraiser

No dash, as a noun, but fund-raising letter, dash as an adjective

G

Gadfly, The:

The student newspaper in Annapolis; italicize title.

Graduate Institute:

Established in 1967 in Santa Fe originally as a summer program for teachers, it was established in 1977 in Annapolis.

H

Headlines:

Chicago 8.167 offers these examples to help when deciding which words should be capitalized:



Mnemonics That Work Are Better Than Rules That Don't
Singing While You Work
A Little Learning Is a Dangerous Thing
Four Theories concerning the Gospel according to Matthew
Taking Down Names, Spelling Them Out, and Typing Them Up
Tired but Happy
The Editor as Anonymous Assistant
From *Homo erectus* to *Homo sapiens*: A Brief History
Sitting on the Floor in an Empty Room, *but* Turn On, Tune In, and Enjoy
Traveling with Fido, *but* A Good Dog to Travel With
Voting for the Bond Issue, *but* Voting For and Against the bond Issue
Ten Hectares per Capita, *but* Landownership and Per Capita Income
Progress in In Vitro Fertilization

Sub-headlines:

Only the first letter of the first word is capitalized. No punctuation is used.

Honorary Alumni:

Use H followed by class year, with no campus abbreviation; e.g. Jeremy Shamos (H03), (H57). [N.B: this has been confused in the past. This settles it].

I

Infinitives, split:

May be split, but should be avoided if possible to avoid upsetting readers.

First seen in the early 13th century work *Brut* by Layamon, the split infinitive was popular in Middle English, becoming rare in Elizabethan English, and became popular again in Modern English. Arguments against it include that it is not commonly part of the English many learned while growing up, that “to” is an integral part of the infinitive form, and that split infinitives do not occur in Latin. Responses to these include that it has become common in spoken English, that “to” is not part of the infinitive form but a marker for it, and that Latin doesn't use a marker so there is no comparison.

The Columbia, Merriam-Webster, Oxford, and Curme style guides all state that it is acceptable, but should be avoided to defer to conservatives (Columbia) or because it is weak style to use it formally (Oxford). Only Curme advocates using it more often.



Internet:
Capitalized (see also Web).

M

The Elizabeth Myers Mitchell Gallery:
Most often referred to as The Mitchell Gallery

MOTH:
An acronym for Music on the Hill; a series of summer concerts hosted by the Santa Fe campus.

N

Names, suffixes:
AP and MLA do not require commas after a name. Chicago (6.49): “*Jr.*,” “*Sr.*,” and *the like*. Commas are no longer required around *Jr.* and *Sr.* If commas are used, however, they must appear both before and after the element. Commas never set off *II*, *III*, and such when used as part of a name.

Names, slang (Johnnie, Middie, Febbie, Prospie):
U.S.N.A. has requested that we do not use the term “Mids” or “Middie.” The term Midshipmen is the proper usage.

Numbers:
Use an acceptable alternative rule for numbers, in accordance with the Chicago Style Manual. Note the need for flexibility in 9.6 *An alternative rule*. Many publications, including those in scientific and financial contests, follow the simple rule of spelling out only single-digit numbers and using numerals for all others. This system should be used with flexibility so as to avoid awkward locutions such as “12 eggs, of which nine were laid yesterday.” Do not spell out dates or official serial numbers. (Exception: when they occur in dialogue.)

June 9, 1978
Part V
32nd Infantry
16th Century



P

Peer institutions:

A list of schools that St. John's chooses to consider its "peers," in general, loosely aligned with the Annapolis Group of Liberal Arts Colleges and the Franklin and Marshall Group.

Phone numbers:

410-626-1234

President:

Never capitalized, except before a proper name- e.g. President Christopher Nelson, President Michael Peters; Presidents Peters and Nelson; the two presidents; Christopher Nelson, the president of the college.

The Program:

The distinctive curriculum at St. John's capitalized. For correct spelling and punctuation, see Admissions Statement of the St. John's Program.

Q

Question Period:

Held after a lecture- note that it is not the "Question and answer period." Answers are not in any way assured, resulting in casual references to it as the "Question and question period" by students. Attendees may enter and depart a question period without discourtesy to anyone.

R

Registrar, office of the:

Always set off after the name to avoid awkward use of the word as a formal title- e.g. Registrar John Doe vs. John Doe, registrar of the Santa Fe campus.

S

Senior Essay and Senior Oral:

Capitalize.

Steiner Lecture:

Capitalize.



Suffixes after Names (see Names)

T

Time:

6 a.m. NOT AM

6 to 10 a.m. NOT 6 a.m. to 10 a.m.

Titles:

Never capitalize a person's title unless it is an official title and it falls before a proper name. Thus Dean Jean Doe, *but* Jean Doe, dean of the Santa Fe campus.

We do not capitalize "tutor", as we consider "tutor" synonymous with "teacher". We do not capitalize it before or after a name for the same reason we do not capitalize "student" before or after a name.

V

Vice president:

Never capitalized, except before a proper name, and never hyphenated. E.g. - Vice President Al Gore invented the Internet, Victoria Mora is vice president for advancement in Santa Fe; the vice president for advancement, Barbara Goyette, oversees fundraising in Annapolis.

W

World Wide Web:

Uppercase when using the full entity; uppercase Web. Lowercase website.

St. John's College website, Web content, etc.

Usage Issues: a short list of words often misused, confused, and abused

Assure/Insure/Ensure:

To *assure* a person of something is to make him or her confident of it. According to Associated Press style, to *ensure* that something happens is to make certain that it does, and to insure is to issue an insurance policy. Other authorities, however, consider *ensure* and *insure* interchangeable. To please conservatives, make the distinction. However, it is worth noting that in older usage these spellings were not clearly distinguished.



Comprise; compose:

Use these with care. To *comprise* means “to be made up of, to include” (e.g. the whole comprises the parts). To *compose* is to “make up, to form the substance of something” (e.g. the parts compose the whole). The phrase *comprised of*, though increasingly common, is poor usage. Instead, use *composed of* or *consisting of*

Enormity:

This means wicked, not very, very big. No one seems to know this anymore.

More than vs. over:

Use more than for amounts e.g.

He has more than five flowers. Not, he has over five flowers.

More than 250 attended. Not, over 250 attended.

Towards/Toward:

The preferred form is without the *s* in American English.

U

Unique:

Means “without like or equal”. There is no degree of uniqueness.

It is a unique home, NOT It is a very unique home.

Utilize:

Avoid. Prefer *use* for simplicity, clarity.