



COLLEGE *for* Creative STUDIES

MONTHLY REPORT STYLE GUIDE

2013

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Numbers

DATES

- Always use Arabic figures, without *st*, *nd*, *rd* or *th*: March 4, not March 4th
- Spell out months used with a specific date: *Fall Open House will be held on October 8.*
- When a phrase lists only a month and year, do not separate the month and the year with commas: *The new Web site will launch in December 2007.*
- When a phrase refers to a month, day and year, set off the day and the year with commas: *January 15, 2008, was the first day of the semester.*

MONEY

- Use the dollar sign and numerical figures (dollars only, no cents) up to \$1 million. Do not use the word dollar: *\$15, \$25,000, \$900,000* NOT: 15 dollars or five dollars
- For amounts one million and above, use the word for million or billion: *\$5.5 billion, \$300 million*
- Round off, unless an exact figure is required: *More than \$900,000* (instead of \$911,222)

NUMERALS

- Spell out the numbers one through nine. Use Arabic numerals for 10 and up. Always use Arabic numerals for ages and percentages, even for numbers less than 10. *7-year old; 1 percent*
- Spell out numbers that start a sentence. If the result is awkward, re-work the sentence: *Seventy-five students attended the symposium yesterday. Yesterday, 635 seniors were awarded degrees.*
 - The exception to this rule is a sentence that begins with a calendar year: *2007 was a record-breaking year for fundraising.*
- In the case of proper names, use words or numerals according to the organization's practice: *3M, Twentieth Century Fund, Big Ten.*

TIME

- Use figures except for noon and midnight
- Use a colon to separate hours from minutes: *3:30 p.m.*

Abbreviations

ACADEMIC DEGREES

- Avoid abbreviations: *Jehuda Reinharz, who has a doctorate in modern Jewish history ...*
- Use an apostrophe in bachelor's degree, master's degree, etc.
- There is no apostrophe in Bachelor of Arts or Master of Science.
- Use abbreviations such as B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. only when the need to identify many people by degree on the first reference would make the preferred method cumbersome; use the abbreviations only after a full name and set the abbreviations off with commas: *Dorothee Kern, Ph.D., delivered a lecture on German Expressionism.*

ACRONYMS

- Spell out all acronyms on the first reference with the acronym following in parentheses. Use the acronym on subsequent instances. *The project was sponsored by the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA). The AIGA is the leading professional association for design.*

CITIES AND STATES

- Spell out the names of the states.
- When used with a city, set off the state with commas before and after: *The students traveled to Memphis, Tennessee, to research their design project.*
- Identify the state along with the city with the exception of the following U.S. cities:

Atlanta	Baltimore	Boston	Chicago	Cincinnati	Cleveland
Dallas	Denver	Detroit	Honolulu	Houston	Indianapolis
Las Vegas	Los Angeles	Miami	Milwaukee	Minneapolis	New Orleans
New York City	Oklahoma City	Philadelphia	Phoenix	Pittsburgh	St. Louis
Salt Lake City	San Antonio	San Diego	San Francisco	Seattle	Washington, D.C.

- Identify the nation along with foreign cities with the exception of the following:

Beijing	Berlin	Brussels	Frankfurt	Hong Kong	London
Madrid	New Delhi	Ottawa	Paris	Seoul	Singapore
Stockholm	Sydney	Tokyo	Toronto	Vancouver	Vienna

COLLEGE FOR CREATIVE STUDIES

- The proper full designation of CCS is the *College for Creative Studies* ("the" not capitalized). *CCS* or the *College* are also acceptable after the first use of the full designation.

UNITED STATES

- As a noun, use United States: *The College for Creative Studies is one of the leading private art and design educational institutions in the United States.*
- As an adjective, use U.S. (periods, no spaces): *A U.S. senator will speak at CCS tomorrow.*

Punctuation

APOSTROPHE

- For plural possessive nouns ending in *s*, add an apostrophe: *the students' grades, states' rights*
- For singular common possessive nouns ending in *s*, add *'s*: *the hostess's invitation, the witness's answer*
- For singular proper names ending in *s*, use only an apostrophe: *College for Creative Studies' mission* – HOWEVER, the possessive of the abbreviation *CCS* is *'s* (i.e., *CCS's*) as the *S* refers to the first letter of *Studies* and not the last.
- For plurals of a single letter, add *'s*: *She received all A's this semester.*
- Do not use *'s* for plurals of numbers or multiple letter combinations: *the 1960s, OEMs*

COLON

- Capitalize the first word after a colon only if it is a proper noun or the start of a complete sentence: *She promised this: The team will go to nationals this year.*
- A colon may be used before a list of items without capitalization: *There were three issues with the project: expense, time and feasibility.*

COMMA

- Put a comma before the conjunction in a simple series: *Boston, Newton, Cambridge, and Lexington*
- Use a comma to set off a person's hometown and age: *Jane Smith, 22, graduated yesterday.*
- Place commas on either side of non-essential statements within sentences: *John, who loves cars, went to the auto show.*

HYPHEN

- Use a hyphen for compound adjectives before the noun: *well-known student, full-time job, 20-year sentence*
- Do not use a hyphen when the compound modifier occurs after the verb: *The student was well known. Her job became full time. He was sentenced to 20 years.*
- Do not use a hyphen with adverbial modifiers: *BBDO is a wholly owned subsidiary of Omnicom.*

PARENTHESES

- The temptation to use parentheses is a clue that a sentence is becoming contorted. Try to rewrite the sentence, putting the incidental information between commas or dashes, or in a separate sentence. If you must use parentheses, follow these punctuation guidelines:
 - Place a period outside a closing parenthesis if the material inside is not a sentence (such as this fragment).
 - If the material is an independent complete sentence, place the period inside the parentheses.

PERIOD

- Use a single space after the period at the end of a sentence.
- Do not put a space between initials: *C.S. Lewis; J.K. Rowling.*

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QUOTATION MARKS

- Periods and commas always go within quotation marks.
- Dashes, semicolons, question marks and exclamation points go within the quotation marks when they apply to the quoted material. They go outside when they apply to the whole sentence.
- Use single marks for quotes within quotes: Smith said, "She told me, 'I wish I had been accepted to CCS.'"

SEMI-COLON

- Use to separate independent, but related, clauses. Each clause should be able to stand on its own as a sentence. *Rowena Reed Kostellow was a renowned educator and helped define the discipline of industrial design; her book is required reading for incoming students.*
- If a list of items is long and complex, semi-colons may be used in place of commas for the sake of clarity.

Titles

TITLES/NAMES OF FACULTY, STAFF AND STUDENTS

- Capitalize the position title of faculty and staff only when it precedes the person's name or when it is taking the place of a proper noun: *Associate Professor John Smith led the student group on a tour of the museum. The Chair went to Paris. (John Doe went to Paris.)*
- Capitalize class cohort year only when referring to particular, named student: *Graphic Design Senior Jane Doe.*
- Adjunct faculty should be referred to as Adjunct Instructors.
- The first reference to a person within a paragraph should include both first and last name. In the case of students, year (freshman, sophomore, etc.) should also be stated. Thereafter, the person may be referred to by last name.

TITLES OF DEPARTMENTS

- Department titles should always be capitalized: *Foundation, Fine Arts, Crafts, etc.*
- The word "Department" or "Office" should be capitalized when it is taking the place of a proper noun: *The Department won numerous prestigious awards.*
- Do not capitalize mediums when used descriptively: *Jane Doe's graphic design project received an award from the AIGA.*

TITLES OF ACADEMIC COURSES

- Do not italicize course titles or put quotation marks around them. Capitalize the principal words, including prepositions and conjunctions of four or more letters and place a colon after the course code: *DVC 200: Concepts and Methods of Visual Culture*

TITLES OF OTHER INDIVIDUALS

- Capitalize all corporate titles and functions: *Jane Doe, President and CEO of XYZ Corporation, Director of Marketing.*

TITLES OF BOOKS, COMPUTER GAMES, MOVIES, OPERAS, PLAYS, POEMS, ALBUMS, SONGS, RADIO AND TELEVISION PROGRAMS, LECTURES, SPEECHES AND WORKS OF ART

- Capitalize the principal words; also capitalize prepositions and conjunctions of four or more letters: *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, Travels With Charlie.*
- Italicize titles of books, scholarly journals, websites, works of art, full-length albums, symphonies, operas, and feature-length films: *Journal of Consumer Culture, BrandChannel.com, Manet's Olympia.*
 - Exception: Do not italicize the Bible.
- Put quotation marks around the titles of articles, essays, poems, short stories, pop songs, short films, and TV shows: *George Orwell's "My Country Right or Left"*

TITLES OF NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

- Capitalize *the* in the name if that is the way the publication prefers to be known.
- Lowercase *the* before names if listing several publications, some of which use *the* as part of the name and some of which do not: *Time, Newsweek, the Washington Post and the New York Times*

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TITLES OF DIRECTIONS/REGIONS

- Lowercase north, south, northeast, northern, etc. when they indicate compass direction: *The cold front is moving east.*
- Capitalize compass points when they designate U.S. regions: *A storm system that developed in the Midwest is spreading eastward.*
- With names of countries, lowercase compass points unless they are part of a proper name or are used to designate a politically divided nation: *northern France, western United States, Northern Ireland*

TITLES OF SEASONS

- Lowercase spring, summer, fall and winter; as well as derivatives like wintertime unless part of a formal name: *the Winter Olympics*

TITLES OF ART MOVEMENTS

- Titles of art movements should be capitalized: *Renaissance, Impressionism, Cubism, Conceptual Art, Relational Aesthetics*

Technological Terms

Here are the correct spelling and capitalization rules for some common technological terms:

BlackBerry, BlackBerrys	download	e-book	e-reader	email	cellphone	Facebook
Google	hashtag	homepage	IM	Internet	iPad, iPhone	LinkedIn
social media	smartphone	the Net	Twitter, tweet	World Wide Web	webmaster	YouTube

Common Problem Word Usage

- Their, they're, there
 - Their is a possessive pronoun: *They went to their cabin.*
 - They're is a contraction for "they are": *They're all doing well.*
 - There is an adverb indicating direction: *We went there for a movie.*
 - There is also used with the force of a pronoun for impersonal construction in which the real subject follows the verb: *There is food in the kitchen.*
- It is *a lot*, not *a lot*.
- It is *afterward*, not *afterwards*. Similarly, it is *backward and forward* not *backwards and forwards*.
- It is *all right*, not *alright*.
- *Assure*, *ensure* and *insure* have different meanings.
 - *Assure* means to "convince" or "promise." *She assured voters she would not raise taxes.*
 - *Ensure* means "to make certain." *The city rationed water to ensure that the supply would last.*
 - Use *insure* when you want to express the sense of protection against some form of financial loss. *The Browns could no longer afford to insure their business.*
- *Get/Have* are not interchangeable. *Get* means to *acquire* or *to come to have possession of*. *Have* means *to hold in one's possession*.
- *Its* is the possessive form; *It's* is the contraction for *it is*. *The Graphic Design Senior Studio had its final presentations last week. It's truly a great honor for Advertising Design students to receive the New York Art Directors Club Gold Cube Award.*
- *That/Which* –
 - *That* is used for restrictive clauses and is not set off by commas. "Restrictive" (means that the intent of the sentence would drastically change if the phrase is omitted. *She told me that in 2012 she was class president.*
 - *Which* is used for nonrestrictive clauses and is set off by commas. "Nonrestrictive" means that the intent of the sentence would not drastically change if the phrase were left out or placed in a separate sentence. *The program, which was started in 1984, has successfully treated about 91 percent of its clients each year.*
 - Eliminate *that* before a phrase if the meaning is clear without it.
- Books and other creative words are *titled* not *entitled*.
- *Who/That*
 - When referring to people it is always *who*, not *that*: *The committee members who were present.*
- It is *would have*, not *would of*. *She would have met me at the movie, but she missed the bus.*
- Use *an* before a vowel sound. Use *a* before a consonant sound: *an hour, a house*.
- The opposite of *more* is either *less* or *fewer*. Use *fewer* for items that can be counted and *less* for items that cannot. *Less stress means fewer mistakes.*
- To *lay* is to place down; to *lie* is to recline.

Writing Clarity

- Avoid using a long word if a short word will do.
- Omit needless words.
- Always use the active voice.
- Do not use a foreign phrase or discipline-specific jargon if it can be helped.
- Use parallel grammatical structure when listing items: *researching, outlining, writing*.
- Write only in third person.
- Write clear and concise sentences; minimize complex sentences whenever possible.
- Be sparing with figures of speech.
- Avoid starting sentences with *But, Like, Which, Whereas*, and similar words. These are generally used to start dependent clauses and indicate that the sentence is probably a fragment.