

## A Guide to Wesleyan Style

It's not grammar and it's not spelling. It's that shadowy third area of language that causes a lot of disagreements. Here's an example of a style question. Adviser can also be spelled "advisor." Which one is correct? Both are. But it's important to be consistent and use just one spelling throughout a publication. Style may also include usage that is unique to a particular institution. Wesleyan, for instance, uses the term Office of Admission. Some other institutions use the term admissions. Both are correct, but it's important to know, and use, the Wesleyan style.

There are many style guide books, and it's not uncommon for them to disagree with each other. For this reason, institutions settle on one guide and use it for all their text editing. The Office of Publications uses the *Chicago Manual of Style, 15th Edition*. Our standard reference for spelling questions is *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, currently in its 11th edition. The *Wesleyan* magazine, however, adopts some conventions from the Associated Press style guide.

Just as language itself is always changing, so matters of style are in constant flux. Successive editions of the *Chicago Manual* reflect the major trends. For example, the current edition suggests that it is acceptable to do away with the commas that previously bracketed suffixes like "Jr." and "Sr." after people's names. It is not uncommon for all of us (even editors) to encounter rules that are not like what we learned in school!

The following is a quick reference to style questions that are frequently encountered at Wesleyan.

A  
a cappella

Office of Admission (not "Admissions")

advisor—This is the preferred spelling for University publications.

African American Studies Program (not "African-American")

Allbritton Center—This center contains the Allbritton Center for the Study of Public Life, the Shapiro Creative Writing Center, the Quantitative Analysis Center, the Feminist, Gender and Sexuality Studies Program, the Science and Society Program, Instruction Media Services, and the office for the publication *History and Theory*.

alumna (one female)

alumnus (one male)

alumni (more than one male) alumnae (more than one female)

Use alumni when referring to a mixed group.

There's no such word as "alum."

a.m.—not am or AM

ampersand sign (&)

Use the word “and” instead of the ampersand sign. The ampersand sign (&) is reserved for proper names, such as Standard & Poor, which use the ampersand sign as an official part of the proper name.

and

Always write out the word “and.” The ampersand sign (&) is reserved for proper names, such as Standard & Poor, which use the ampersand sign as an official part of the proper name.

But: For Reunion & Commencement, the ampersand is part of the brand name.

Andrus Field

Annual Fund

Always capitalized, even when the full name (Wesleyan Annual Fund) is not used.

apostrophes

Wesleyan publications use “curly” apostrophes and quote marks rather than straight marks ( ' and "). Creating these marks on your computer is quite simple. Please call the University Communication editors if you need help.

Art and Art History (Department of)

art studio major (not studio art major)

Asian Pacific American Alliance (A/PAA)

B

bachelor's degree or BA (plural=BAs) ; bachelor of science

Readers may be accustomed to seeing this and other academic abbreviations punctuated with periods. Here is the Chicago Manual's comment on the move away from this practice: “The trend now is strongly away from the use of periods with all kinds of abbreviations that have carried them in the past. In the University of Chicago Press's view this is to the good: anything that reduces the fussiness of typography makes for easier reading.”

best seller (two words)

But: best-selling author

Board of Trustees (always capitalized)

## C

capital letters—Avoid using all capital letters when typing out headings and names of events and lectures when submitting copy to the Office of University Communications. Headings and names of events and lectures should be typed out using uppercase and lowercase letters.

Career Center (not Career Resource Center)

Center for African American Studies

Center for Film Studies—not Film Studies Center

check-in/check in, checkout/check out

Check-in and checkout are nouns. Check in and check out are verbs.

Class of 1932 or Class of '32\* (but senior class, junior class, etc.)

(\*to make the inverted apostrophe before the class year on your computer, hold down the option & shift keys & the end bracket, located two keys to the right of the P key. Also in Word, the correct inverted apostrophe should occur when you press the space bar.)

Commencement (the event)

Connelly Room

Convocation (the event)

## D

database (one word)

## dashes

There are two kinds of dashes:

N dash: Connects ongoing series of numbers or dates (1999–2000, pages 29–35, May–June). N dashes are made on the Mac by typing “option” and the dash key; on the PC by typing “control” and the minus key on the far right of the keyboard.

M dash: Used somewhat like a comma, but produces a more noticeable pause in a sentence. “The regional director—she had been waiting all afternoon for a major donor to return her call—jumped when the phone rang.” M dashes are made on the Mac by typing “shift,” “option,” and the

dash key; on the PC by typing “control,” “option,” and the minus key on the far right of the keyboard.

dates:

the 1940s

the 20th century (Superscripts—20th, for example—should not be used in everyday language. They are reserved for academic citations, especially in music and mathematics.) Centuries are only hyphenated when they are used as adjectives: 20th-century art.

For months and days, use ordinal not cardinal numbers:

August 2 (not August 2nd)

Davison Art Center (DAC; FDAC for Friends of the Davison Art Center)

Davison Art Center print collection

Davison Rare Book Room (in Olin Library)

Deans’ Office; also grouped with Student Affairs/Deans’ Office

Departments

Department of Classical Studies (not Classics Department)

Department of German Studies (not German Department)

In recent times and in less formal documents, department and program names are not necessarily capitalized, especially when several departments or programs are named at once: biology, chemistry, and mathematics departments

Formal documents: Department of Chemistry

But: department of chemistry or chemistry department are often preferred

Do not capitalize academic disciplines or majors:

Dave is studying chemistry.

My favorite subject is biology.

Zelda is a classical studies major.

However: The most popular major is English. He is a professor of American studies. The major in Russian and East European studies . . .

dollar sign

Use the dollar sign when a specific dollar amount is mentioned:

Betty donated \$5 million to the White Shoe Foundation.

But:

Betty has donated millions of dollars to her favorite charity.

His father has a business worth half a billion dollars.

If you are using Word Press, do not use the dollar sign in headlines. It will appear as 0 in Google.

## E

ellipses—a series of three dots used to indicate that something has been left out of a quotation.

There should be spaces before, after, and between the three dots in quotations:

“I liked the book . . . and admire the illustrations, ” said Margery.

## e-mail

### e-mail addresses

E-mail addresses should **not** be underlined in text and should appear in black font.

Correct: ltipping@wesleyan.edu

Incorrect: ltipping@wesleyan.edu

If it is necessary to divide an e-mail address in text, no hyphen should be used and the break should be made after the symbol @:

For further information, contact Mary Wells at 860-666-666 or at mwells@wesleyan.edu

## emeritus

Capitalize “emeritus” when it is used before a proper name:

Professor Emeritus Arthur Wensinger

Use “emerita” when referring to a woman:

Professor Emerita Sheila Gaudon

But: Henry is a professor emeritus.

Note: George Creeger is professor emeritus of English—not, George Creeger is professor of English, emeritus

But: Louisa Smith is Olin Professor of English, Emeritus

Eras

Use AD, BC, CE, BCE—full capitals, no periods

F

Faculty Student Affairs Committee—not, Student Affairs Committee

fax, not FAX

Film Studies—Film Studies is a department, not a program.

firsthand— one word

first-year student (not frosh or freshman)

Willbur Fisk—There are two Is in Willbur.

Fulbright fellowship

A student is a Fulbright scholar or a Fulbright fellow.

fundraising— one word (This usage does not follow Webster's.)

G

grades

Word grades, when written out, are not capped—absent, incomplete, etc., but are capped when they appear as single letters A, I, etc.

GOLD Group—not G.O.L.D.

The o in “of” is not capped (Graduates of the Last Decade)

H

home page (two words)

Homecoming (the event); also Homecoming/Family Weekend (not Parents Weekend)

hyphens—Please see “Dashes” above

I

interlibrary loan

International Baccalaureate (IB)

Internet (always capital I)

invitation style

No punctuation at the ends of lines; internal punctuation only

No zeroes is the preferred style: 7 p.m. Use zeroes in more formal documents (7:00 p.m.)

Capitalize titles after people's names

italics

Use italics for names of books, movies, plays, and television shows. Poems are enclosed in quotation marks.

Use italics for names of legal cases when mentioned in text.

Use italics for titles of operas, oratorios, tone poems, and other long compositions. Titles of songs are set in roman and surrounded by quotations marks.

Use italics for names of paintings, drawings, and other art works, including cartoons and comic strips.

But: Names of exhibitions and fairs should not be italicized.

J

Jr.—The Chicago Manual now recommends that “Jr.” and “Sr.” not be set off with commas: Fred Flintstone Jr. is a member of the Olin Associates.

K

kickoff (n.)—not kick-off

L

libraries

All the Wesleyan libraries, taken as a single administrative unit, are called the Wesleyan Library, which is capped.

Listserv, not listserve—the word “Listserv” is a trademark

log-in (n.)—not login

M

master's degree or MA (plural=MA's)

MALS (Master of Liberal Studies, which is a GLSP degree)

Millett Room (in Russell House)

months

Names of months are always spelled out in text, whether alone or in dates. Capitalize the names of months in all uses. If it is necessary to abbreviate, only do so with Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., and Dec.

N

Nietzch Factor (ultimate Frisbee team)

numerals:

Use words for one through nine, numerals for 10 and above.

Spell out “million” when using a round figure:

Lionel Hepplethwaite left Wesleyan \$47.3 million.

But:

Leona Hepplethwaite left Wellesley \$477,353,767.

Lila Hepplethwaite gave \$47,353 to Williams.

Spell out a numeral at the beginning of a sentence:

Ninety-seven students are volunteer tutors.

Spell out casual expressions:

Thanks a million.

In news headlines, use “M” for “million”: NSF Awards \$2.4M to Scott Plous

O

offices

Capitalize when referring to the organization (Deans’ Office, President’s Office), lowercase when referring to a physical place (chemistry department office)

Online—not on-line

Orientation, the event, is capped

P

Parents Council

Parents Fund

Parents Handbook



percent

The increase is 12 percent—not “12 %”

PhD (plural=PhDs)

place names

Permanent campus sites are capitalized (North College Lawn, North College Steps, Davison Courtyard, etc.). Temporary sites are not capped (registration tent, registration table, etc.)

plural of thoroughfares

The names of streets, avenues, squares, parks, etc., are capitalized.

In the plural form, street, avenue, etc. are usually lowercased:  
Lexington Avenue; Lexington and Seventh avenues  
Palmetto Street; Palmetto and Oak streets

p.m.—not pm or PM

poster style

See invitation style above

prefixes

Most are not hyphenated (cochair, multipurpose, nonprofit, postgame, etc.). Webster’s lists words that require hyphenated prefixes.

President

When used before a name, “president” is capitalized:

President Michael S. Roth

But:

Douglas J. Bennet, president of Wesleyan, attended the meeting.

Douglas J. Bennet is the president of Wesleyan.

Program names:

African American Studies Program

American Studies Program

Latin American Studies Program

Professor:

When used before a name, “professor” is capitalized:

Professor Robert Rollefson or Professor of Physics Robert Rollefson

But:

When “professor” follows the name (or no name is included), use

lower case:

Robert Rollefson, professor of physics, gave a lecture.  
He is a physics professor.

However, named professorships are always capitalized:  
George Creeger is the Willbur Fisk Osborne Professor of English.

Many faculty members at Wesleyan teach in a variety of programs, but all of them have only one home department. Professor X may teach in the African American studies and American studies programs, but she is a member of the history department faculty. Be sure to properly identify the single department to which a faculty member belongs.

## Q

quotations:

At the end of a quotation, a period or comma is placed inside the quotation mark; a semi-colon or colon is placed outside the quotation mark:

“I’ll write a check for \$1 million,” Mr. Buckram said.

Mrs. Peevish scolded us for making “such a foolish request”;  
later, we received the check for \$1 million.

A question mark or an exclamation mark is placed inside the quotation only if it applies to the quotation:

He asked me, “Are you kidding?”

Did he tell you, “I’m only kidding”?

quotation marks and apostrophes—Wesleyan publications use “curly” apostrophes and quote marks rather than straight marks (‘ and ’). Creating these marks on your computer is quite simple. Please call the Office of University Communications if you need help.

## R

Reunion (the event—always capped)

Reunion & Commencement—note use of ampersand instead of “and”

RSVP—Webster’s says caps and no punctuation

## S

seasons are not capitalized--winter, spring, summer, fall

sendoff—as in “summer sendoff”

setup is a noun “The new darkroom is an impressive setup.”

set up—used to describe an activity “Please come early to set up the tent.”

spacing between sentences—Single spacing, not double spacing, should be used between sentences.

## sports

Sports are not capitalized: Casey is on the baseball team.

But exceptions are:

Rugby (after the Rugby School in England)

Frisbee (a trademarked name)

Wiffle (a trademarked name)

## states' names:

State names are always written out in text. If you need to abbreviate in text other than an address, use the list below. Only use the U.S. Postal Service abbreviations (CT instead of Conn. etc.) immediately before a ZIP Code number.

### State abbreviations

Ala.	Ky.	N. Dak.
Alaska	La.	Ohio
Ariz.	Maine	Okla.
Ark.	Md.	Ore. or Oreg.
Calif.	Mass.	Pa.
Colo.	Mich.	R.I.
Conn.	Minn.	S.C.
Del.	Mo.	S. Dak.
D.C.	Mont.	Tenn.
Fla.	Neb. or Nebr.	Tex.
Ga.	Nev.	Utah
Hawaii	N.H.	Vt.
Idaho	N.J.	Va.
Ill.	N. Mex.	Wash.
Ind.	N.Y.	W. Va.
Iowa	N.C.	Wis. or Wisc.
Kans.		Wyo.

## Superscript

Superscript (14<sup>th</sup>) is reserved for footnoting and scientific material. It should not be used in ordinary text. Correct: 14th

## T

## The

Do not capitalize the “t” in “the” unless it appears at the beginning of a sentence:

We received a grant from the Ford Foundation.

The Ford Foundation has been generous.

But if “the” is a part of the official name of a publication, the “t” is often capitalized:

*The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The New Yorker*

## titles

People’s titles are capitalized when they appear immediately before the name (Dean Martin Shore) but are not capped when they appear by themselves or after the name (Martin Shore, dean of the college; the dean is attending a conference). Capitalize titles after names only on invitations or posters or when appearing directly under a person’s name in a list of names and titles.

## Trustee

Capitalize Trustee when it is used before a proper name.

Trustee Alan Dachs

But: Alan Dachs is a trustee.

## U

UConn—abbreviation for University of Connecticut

UMass—abbreviation for University of Massachusetts

Ujamaa

under way, not underway

United States vs. U.S.

Avoid abbreviating the United States in text.

U.S. may be used as an adjective, but whenever possible spell out “United States upon first mention.

## University

Capitalize “university” when referring to Wesleyan University as a noun, particularly more formal and official publications:

The University offers both MA and PhD degrees.

This style rule is not followed in the *Wesleyan* magazine, online newsletter, and some online media.

Also: the University Plan

University Relations—Office of University Relations (not development and not Alumni Office)

upperclass student, not upper class or upper-class

## URLs

If you need to divide a URL in text, do not use a hyphen. The break should be made after a colon, a slash, or a double slash but before a period or any other punctuation or symbols:

[http://www.roundabouttheater.org/  
members](http://www.roundabouttheater.org/members)

or

[http://www  
.roundabouttheater.org/members](http://www.<br/>.roundabouttheater.org/members)

Note: A URL containing a hyphen should not be divided at the hyphen.

user group

## V

versus—abbreviated vs.

Note: In legal cases, versus is abbreviated as v.

vice president (no hyphen)

voice mail

But: voice-mail message

## W

the Web (not World Wide Web)

But: web site (two words)

web page (two words)

WES—Always capitalize WES when creating a new word beginning with these letters (WESeminars)

Wesleyan Writers Conference

Wesleyan teaching award—The Binswanger Prize for Excellence in Teaching is given to three faculty members at Commencement.

Y

Z

Zilkha Gallery—More formally, the Ezra and Cecile Zilkha Gallery