

# Stylebook: Huntley High School Journalism

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**NOTE:** In any good newspaper or yearbook, a stylebook is the definitive reference for a publication's grammar, punctuation, and writing style rules. It is the BIBLE for that publication; without it, writers would feel free to make up rules as they go, lending an air of chaos to the publication. Throughout this school year, you will be asked to know this stylebook inside and out, not just for journalism, but for your writing in general.

## 5 REASONS TO HIT THE DELETE KEY WHEN YOU ARE WRITING IN JOURNALISTIC STYLE:

### 1. PASSIVE VERBS:

- **EXAMPLE:** *This is a problem many reporters struggle with. The sentences that are written by them are passive. Their phrasing is made awkward because of this. Eek.*
- **REDO:** *Many reporters struggle because they write passive sentences. This makes their phrasing awkward.*

### 2. REDUNDANCY:

- *He's currently president of the club. The game is scheduled for Friday night. The victims burned in the flames.*
- *The italicized words aren't needed. Sound logical, but add nothing to the sentences.*
- *Edit yourself ruthlessly!*

### 3. LONG, LONG, LONG WORDY SENTENCES:

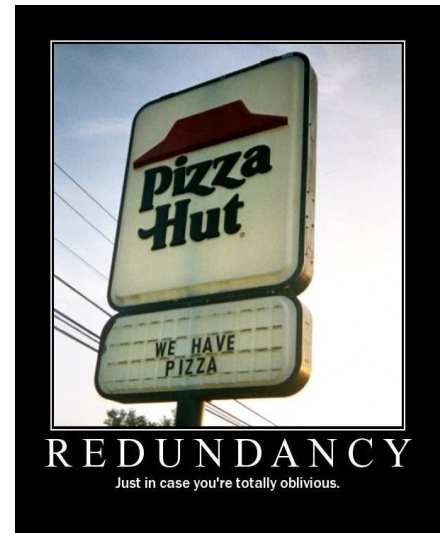
- *It should be pointed out that many writers, in order to make themselves sound much more profound and scholarly than indeed they actually are, use flabby, inflated wording such as "it should be pointed out" and "in order to" and "indeed"-which we just did ourselves, in fact, earlier in this sentence-in addition to piling up clauses (some using dashes such as those a few words back) or parentheses, such as those in the line above, not to mention semicolons, which often suggest that the writer wants to end the sentence, but just can't bring himself to actually type a period; nonetheless, today's busy readers are too impatient. . .*

### 4. JARGON/JOURNALESE:

- *Politicians love to use words like utilize, finalize, and structured. Police like to say suspects are apprehended and incarcerated.*
- *Good reporters relentlessly filter out bloated, convoluted jargon and officialese. And those who don't should be redirected, transitioned, involuntarily separated, or possibly subject to personnel surplus reduction – ie. Fired.*
- *Journalists write in "journalese" sometimes too:*
- *Negotiators yesterday, in an eleventh-hour decision following marathon talks, hammered out agreement on a key wage provision they earlier had rejected.*

### 5. CLICHÉS:

- *Beyond a shadow of a doubt, you should work 24/7 to avoid clichés like the plague. Get it? Hel-lo? It's a no brainer. Go ahead...make my day.*
- *Tired clichés like these lower the IQ of your writing. So do corny newswriting clichés like these:*
- *The close-knit community was shaken by the tragedy.*



- *Tempers flared over a laundry list of complaints.*
- *The embattled mayor is cautiously optimistic, but troubled youths face an uncertain future, sparked by massive blasts in bullet-riddled, shark-infested waters. So now begins the heartbreaking task of cleaning up.*

**AP STYLE RULES:** The following punctuation and grammar rules are a short version of the AP Stylebook, the definitive reference for reporters and editors.

**Abbreviations:**

*Rule of thumb: When in doubt, spell it out.*

1. **Christmas:** Never use *Xmas*.
2. **Colleges:** When abbreviating the names of colleges and universities, do not use periods: *PSU, UO, OSU, WSU, UCLA, PCC, MHCC, ND*. Capitalize when part of a proper name: *Dartmouth College, the University of Notre Dame*.
3. **College exams:** When abbreviating the name of college exams, do not use periods: *ACT, SAT*.
4. **Curriculum:** *physical education*, not *P.E.* or *phys. Ed.*; *home economics*, not *home ec.*
5. **Days of the week:** Never abbreviate these. *Monday*, not *Mon*.
6. **Huntley High School:** *HHS* can be used for Huntley High School, but be careful of overuse in copy and headlines.
7. **Junior, senior:** Abbreviate as *Jr.* and *Sr.* only with full names of persons or animals. Do not precede by a comma: *Martin Luther King Jr.* If necessary to distinguish between father and son in second reference, use *the elder Smith* or *the younger Smith*.
8. **Measurements:** Use figures and spell out words such as inches, feet, yards, etc. to indicate depth, height, length and width: *He is 5 feet 6 inches tall*. Hyphenate compound adjectives before nouns: *the 5-foot-6-inch man; the 5-foot man; the car is 17 feet long, 6 feet wide, and 5 feet high; the storm left 5 inches of snow*.
9. **Money:** Use the \$ and decimal system for amounts larger than one dollar: *\$1.01, \$2.50*. Omit zeroes and decimal point when sums are whole: *\$1, \$5, \$200*. Spell out the word cents, using numerals for amounts less than a dollar: *45 cents* (not *\$.45, 45 cts., forty five cents*). Subject/verb agreement: specific amounts of money use a singular verb (*Fifty dollars was what the group needed*), but vague amounts need plural verbs (*A few dollars were on the table*).
10. **Months:** Months of the year should be abbreviated when used with specific dates: *Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.* The date is always given in figures (*Jan. 3*) not other forms (*Jan. 3rd, Jan. third*). Do not, however, abbreviate the months of March, April, May, June, July. . .they're short already (**under six letters**).
11. **Organizations:** The proper name of an organization is always written out on first reference. The title of such an organization may be abbreviated - without periods - on second reference and thereafter if it will be clearly understood by readers. Do not follow an organization's full name with an abbreviation or acronym in parentheses or set off by dashes. Abbreviate, without periods, if clearly understood: *FFA, FTA, NAACP, ACLU, VICA, PTA, FBI, CIA*.
12. **Percent:** one word-*45 percent*, not *45 per cent*.
13. **States:** Abbreviate when preceded by the name of a city, thus: *Huntley, Ill.*, but spell out when used alone such as California, Colorado, Florida, etc. Do not use postal abbreviations to identify states. The state name is needed when the city has the same name as another city (such as *Vancouver, Wash.* and *Vancouver, B.C.*), or when referring to unfamiliar cities outside the home state. Use these abbreviations:

Ala.	Fla.	Mass.	N.C.	Pa.	W. Va.
Ariz.	Ga.	Mich.	N.H.	R.I.	Wyo.
Ark.	Ill.	Minn.	N.J.	S.C.	Wis.
Calif.	Ind.	Miss.	N.M.	S.D.	
Colo.	Kan.	Mo.	N.Y.	Tenn.	
Conn.	Ky.	Mont.	N.D.	Vt.	
Del .	La.	Neb.	Okla.	Va.	
D.C.	Md.	Nev.	Ore.	Wash.	

Do not abbreviate Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas, or Utah. (They're already short)

**NOTE:** No state is needed with the following cities: Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Honolulu, Houston, Indianapolis, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Miami, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, New Orleans, New York, Oklahoma City, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Salt Lake City, San Antonio, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, Washington.

- 14. Titles:** Abbreviate only the titles senator, representative, governor, doctor, lieutenant, and the reverend before a full name: *Sen. Gordon Smith, Rep. Elizabeth Furse, Gov. John Kitzhaber, Dr. Lendon Smith, the Rev. Dan Pitney*. Do not abbreviate or capitalize titles which follow names: *Ron Wyden, senator; Carla Peragine, editor; Dave Johnson, principal*.
- 15. United States of America:** The abbreviation U.S. is acceptable as a noun or adjective for *United States*. In headlines, it's *US* (no periods). **USA:** No periods in the abbreviated form for United States of America.

**NOTE:** Do not use contractions (won't, couldn't, shouldn't) in most cases. Quotations are one exception to the rule. Also in columns. . .they are usually OK. When you write a column, you have a certain voice, one that could lend itself to the use of contractions. But with straight up reporting/paraphrasing, try to stay away from them.

**NOTE II:** With all of these abbreviation rules, remember that if a person says something and you directly quote him/her, leave their words alone. For example, if Jeannie Jones says, "I love home ec.," leave her quotation alone. Don't change it to "home economics". . .it changes the nature of what she says.

**NOTE III:** With acronyms (for example WMD for "weapons of mass destruction" or CD for "compact disc") don't use an apostrophe when you are using a plural. *She picked up three CDs at the store*. See. . .no 's at the end, just an s.

### **Capitalization**

*Capitalize each of the following:*

- 1. Advanced Placement Program:** *AP, AP tests, Advanced Placement English, advanced placement class* (lowercase because it is not the official title).
- 2. Athletic teams:** *Gators, Red Raiders, Lions, Demons*.
- 3. Awards, titles:** *Teacher of the Year, Most Valuable Player, National Merit Scholar Finalist, National Honor Society, Illinois State Scholars, Quill and Scroll*.
- 4. Bible:** Capitalize when you mean the black book in American hotel rooms everywhere. Lowercase when you use the term as slang for an authoritative source. Example: *Elements of Style is my bible*.
- 5. Board of education:** Capitalize as part of a formal name: *the District 158 Board of Education, the Board of Education*. Lowercase *school board* unless it is the proper name: *the District 158 School Board, the school board*.
- 6. Buildings:** *Rosemont Theater, Turnbull Building, Notre Dame Stadium (woo hoo!), but, The show took place in the auditorium, or, The stadium was packed*.
- 7. Christian:** *The group meets after school to talk about their Christian faith*.
- 8. Church:** Capitalize as part of the formal name of a building, a congregation or a denomination: *St. Mary's Church, The Roman Catholic Church*. Lowercase in other uses: *The pope says the church opposes abortion*.
- 9. Classes:** Capitalize official class names, but use lowercase when used to identify individuals. *She is a junior. She is a member of the Junior Class. Jake Sanchez, Class of 2013*.
- 10. Clubs and organizations:** Capitalize the names of clubs and organizations: *Speech Team, Pep Club, French Club, Ski Club, Spanish Club (but "the club")*.
- 11. Colleges and universities:** Capitalize formal names of schools and departments of colleges and universities, but use lowercase when informal names are used: *School of Music (but "music school"), Department of Zoology (but "zoology department")*.
- 12. Committees:** Capitalize official titles of school committees: *Handbook Committee, Prom Committee, Graduation Committee*.
- 13. Compact Disc:** CD, not cd, or cee-dee.
- 14. Conferences:** Capitalize the formal names of conferences. *He won the Fox Valley Conference championship, but, He won the conference championship*.

15. **Course titles:** Capitalize only the proper name for a class. If in doubt, consult the course catalogue. *Computer Applications, English IVH, Geometry*, but, *math class*.
16. **Dances:** Capitalize dance titles, especially Homecoming and Prom. *The Prom was a huge success*.
17. **District name:** *Huntley High School is a part of District 158*. But, use “district” when not with the specific district’s name. *It was important to the district*.
18. **Documents:** *Constitution* (referring to the U.S. Constitution and State Constitution), *Declaration of Independence, Bill of Rights, First Amendment*.
19. **Family names:** Capitalize words denoting family relationships only when they precede the name of a person or when they stand unmodified as a substitute for a person’s name: *I wrote to Grandfather Smith. I wrote Mother a letter. I wrote my mother a letter*.
20. **Food:** Most food names are lowercase: *apples, cheese, peanut butter*. Capitalize brand names and trademarks: *Roquefort cheese, Tabasco sauce*. Most proper nouns or adjective are capitalized when they occur in a food name: *Boston brown bread, Russian dressing, Swiss cheese, Waldorf salad*. Lowercase is used, however, when the food does not depend on the proper noun or adjective for its meaning: *french fries*. Check separate entries in the AP Stylebook if you are not sure.
21. **Geographic regions:** Capitalize these words (North, South) when they designate regions: *Pacific Northwest, Snow fell on the Northeast, I am from the South*. Do not capitalize when used as compass directions. *I traveled south*.
22. **Government bodies:** Capitalize congressional committees, cabinet positions, specific courts, governmental agencies, district and school governing bodies: *Senate, House, U.S. Supreme Court, Legislature* (even though not preceded by a state name), *Grievance Committee, Huntley School Board* (but "school board"), *Huntley Public Schools*.
23. **Holidays:** *Christmas, Passover, Thanksgiving Day*.
24. **Internet:** Always capitalized, as is the *Net*.
25. **Junior Varsity:** Capitalize and do not use periods when using as a modifier, as in JV team. Otherwise, spell it out: *JV baseball, JV volleyball, JV football*.
26. **Magazines:** *Life, Newsweek, Time*.
27. **MP3:** A popular audio compression format on the Internet. Capitalize. Not mp3, mp-3 or MP-3.
28. **Muslim:** *The association is a group of Muslim students who meet Tuesdays after school*.
29. **Nationalities:** *Chinese, Irish, Hispanics*.
30. **Newspapers:** article “the” may be capitalized if it is in the name – *The Voice*.
31. **Race:** Do not refer to race unless it is relevant to the story. When it is relevant, identify a person's origin by geopolitical area and/or nationality: *African-American, European-American, Asian-American, Native-American, Mexican-American, Indian*.
32. **Social media websites:** *MySpace, Facebook*
33. **Titles:** Capitalize specific titles preceding and attached to a name, but lowercase a title if it follows a name or stands by itself: *President Barack Obama; George Bush, president; Principal Dave Johnson; Dave Johnson, principal; Assistant Principal Sharon Hartman; Coach Chris Maxedon; Chris Maxedon, coach; John Burkey, superintendent of District 158 (name of the district is capitalized); Superintendent John Burkey*. NOTE: Do not capitalize false titles or occupational titles: *day laborer James Delaney, junior Joe Bright, southpaw Pete Gomez, attorney John Smith, teacher Tom George, custodian Trace Good, counselor Pat Olson-McGee, adviser Dennis Brown, editor Tyler Davis*.
34. **Wi-Fi:** For the wireless networking standards; capitalize.
35. **World Wide Web/the Web/Web page:** Cap these when referring to the World Wide Web. But see “website” below.
36. **Valedictorian, Salutatorian:** *Marcia Jones was named Valedictorian of the class*.

Do not capitalize:

1. **Board of Education:** Unless it is used with District 158, don’t cap this. “I hope to add accountability to the board of education,” said Smith. *The board of education of District 158*. . . but, *The District 158 Board of Education*. . .
2. **Classes:** *senior, junior*, when used with individual names as identification, but *Junior Class, Senior Class*.
3. **Degrees when spelled out:** *bachelor of arts degree, master's degree*.
4. **Departments of high schools:** Use lowercase except for proper nouns. *English department, science department*. Capitalize only when part of a formal name: *Northwestern University Department of Medicine*.
5. **Directions:** *Seattle is north of Portland*.

6. **District office:** *She has worked in the district office for five years*
7. **eBay Inc.:** The online auctioneer is lowercase “e” unless it’s the start of a sentence.
8. **Editorial Board:** *She has served on the editorial board for three years.*
9. **Email:** *Send me the draft via email.* (Notice too that *email* is not *e-mail*. . .no hyphen).
10. **Governmental bodies:** when not used specifically-*student body, city council, student council, senate, but Phoenix City Council, Huntley High School Student Council.*
11. **Graduation:** *She attended her graduation.*
12. **High school or middle school,** unless with the name of the school. “They came to the high school later.”
13. **iPod:** *He received a new iPod touch for Christmas.* Also iPod nano, iPod shuffle, iTunes.
14. **Points on a compass:** *east, west,* except when referring to specific geographical regions such as *Southwestern United States, the East.*
15. **Regionals/sectionals:** *The baseball team placed first in their regional.* If the name of the tournament is used, however, capitalize it: *The baseball team finished first in the Deerfield Regional Tournament.*
16. **Seasons:** spring, winter (unless part of a formal name, such as Winter Ball, Spring Fling. . .spring break isn't really a formal event, so don't capitalize it).
17. **Sports teams:** *basketball team, baseball team, varsity soccer team, junior varsity soccer team.*
18. **Subjects, unless they are specific course titles:** *algebra, a course in speech, but Speech I* (it’s the name of a specific class). English, American and Spanish should be spelled out though because they are nationalities as well as courses.
19. **Time:** *a.m. or p.m.* not *AM* or *PM*.
20. **Varsity:** Do not capitalize varsity unless it is part of a proper name: *It was an exciting moment for Varsity Rally, the varsity basketball team, and the junior varsity football team.*
21. **Website:** *He spent hours looking for the website.* Includes other web related compounds: *webcam, webcast, webmaster.* Know the difference between these words and those associated with the World Wide Web above.

### Identification

1. **In general, do not use Miss, Mrs., Ms., or Mr.** unless you are quoting someone who said it (“I love Mr. Smith. . .he’s such a good teacher,” said Jones). Otherwise, use the person’s full name followed by his/her job or title. After that, refer to that person using his/her last name. “*Laura Devlin, English teacher. . .When asked her response, Devlin said.*”
2. When it is necessary to distinguish between two people who use the same last name, as in married couples or brothers and sisters, use the first and last name, without courtesy title.
3. Identify students as listed in official sources, such as their class, positions in organizations, etc. *John Smith, senior; Mary Smith, president of the student council; Linda Jones, administrative secretary.*
4. **Parents and children:** Talk to me if you have a situation where you are using the names of a parent and his/her child in a story, or a brother and sister in a story. Both may have the same last name, so first names may be OK. . .but just see me. The technical AP rules about kids/parents are the following:
  - To differentiate between a parent and child, use: *the elder Smith, the younger Smith.*
  - **Children:** In general, call children 15 or younger by their first name on second reference. Use the last name, however, if the seriousness of the story calls for it, as in a murder case, for example. For ages 16 and 17, use judgment, but generally go with the surname unless it’s a light story. Use the surname for those 18 and older.
5. Words like African American are only hyphenated when they are used as adjectives. *African-American authors, I am an African American.* Remember that this describes only Americans, not all Africans!

### Numerals

- **Cardinal numbers:** Except for the rules below, **spell out whole numbers below 10, use figures for 10 and above:** *nine houses; 45 cars; 365 days a year; two days.*
- **Ordinal numbers:** Spell out first through ninth when they indicate sequence in time of location: *first base, the First Amendment, he was first in line.* Starting with 10<sup>th</sup>, use figures. *He finished 10<sup>th</sup>. We celebrated his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. The 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment.*

Use figures for:

1. **Ages:** always use figures in reference to age. *John Smith, 15; 9-year-old girl; Timothy is 6 years old.*

**NOTE:** Use hyphens for ages expressed as adjectives before a noun or as substitutes for a noun. Examples: *A 5-year-old boy. But, the boy is 5 years old. The boy, 7, has a sister, 10. The race is for 3-year-olds. The woman is in her 30s (no apostrophe).*

2. **Auxiliary adjectives:** *10-pound; 3-inch; 79-year-old.*
3. **Dates:** *Oct. 14, March 9, not March 9<sup>th</sup> or ninth of March*, but write in full when a number precedes an event such as *sixth anniversary*. Also, the current year is never included in a date: *The game was Oct. 2.*
4. **Decades:** Use Arabic figures to indicate a decade, an apostrophe in place of numerals that are left out, and add the letter *s* to form a plural: *the 1980s, the '20s, The Roaring '20s. the mid-1970s*. Even at the beginning of a sentence, use a figure: *1968 was a good year, I'm told.*
5. **Fractions:** Spell out amounts less than 1 in stories, using hyphens between the words: *two-thirds, four-fifths, seven-sixteenths, etc.* Use figures for precise amounts larger than 1, converting to decimals whenever practical: *1.25, 2.85.*
6. **Measurements:** Use figures, and spell out the words inches, feet, pounds, yards, etc. to indicate depth, weight height, length and width, even for numbers less than 10. *The book weighs 2 pounds. The center is 6 feet tall. The baby weighed 8 pounds, 4 ounces.* Hyphenate compound adjectives when they come directly before a noun: *She is 5 feet, 10 inches tall, the 6-foot-4 -inch woman, the 6-foot-4 woman, the 6-foot woman, the basketball team signed a 7-footer. She had an 8-pound, 4-ounce boy.*

**NOTE (TRACK & FIELD):** On first reference in a story, use numbers and full words for increments: *14 feet, 3 inches* (use numerals for ALL distances, times, etc., in sports). On second and subsequent references, leave out the increments: *14-3.*

In a track and field story, you'll have lots of time and distance references. First/second references for distances follows the rule above. A separate first reference for time would spell out the time, even when you've already spelled out a distance.

For example: *"Joe Schmo cleared 14 feet, 3 inches in the pole vault on his first jump; he eventually improved to 14-6. Later, he ran the 1,500 meters in 4 minutes, 45.6 seconds, an improvement over his previous best of 4:48.27."*

7. **Money:** Figures are used for sums of money, except for casual references. When money is in the millions, use the dollar sign, figures and decimals as necessary, spelling out the word million. Omit zeroes and decimal point when sums are even: *\$4; \$6.85; 4 cents, \$39.5 million; Dad please give me a dollar; She is worth exactly \$2,434,839; She is worth \$2.4 million.*
8. **Percent:** *9 percent, not 9.0 percent; 15 percent.*
9. **Scores:** *Leon 56, Florida 54; the Redskins defeated the Hawks 6-5.*
10. **Temperatures:** Use figures for all except zero. Use a word, not a minus sign, to indicate temperatures below zero. Right: *The day's low was minus 10.* Right: *The day's low was 10 below zero.* Wrong: *The day's low was -10.* Right: *The temperature rose to zero by noon.* Right: *The day's high was expected to be 9 or 10.*  
Also: *5-degree temperatures, temperatures fell 5 degrees, temperatures in the 30s (no apostrophe).*  
Temperatures get higher or lower, but they don't get warmer or cooler. Wrong: *Temperatures are expected to warm up in the area Friday.* Right: *Temperatures are expected to rise in the area Friday.*
11. **Times:** Use figures except for *noon* and *midnight*. Use a colon to separate hours from minutes: *11 a.m., 1 p.m., 3:30 p.m.* Avoid such redundancies such as *10 a.m. this morning, 10 p.m. tonight or 10 p.m. Monday night.* Use *10 a.m. or 10 p.m. Monday*, etc. as required by the norms in time element. The construction *4 o'clock* is acceptable, but time listings with *a.m.* or *p.m.* are preferred.
12. **Weights and measures:** Use figures for all numbers that indicate height, weight, width, etc., even for numbers less than 10. Example: *The book weighs 2 pounds.*

Do not use figures:

1. **Addresses:** Spell out and capitalize First through Ninth as street names: *486 Third St.*
2. **Expressions:** *A committee of one hundred; ninety-nine out of a hundred; half a million; one man in a thousand.*
3. **Sentence or headline beginnings:** supply initial word or spell out figures: "*Fifteen thousand dollars*" or "*A total of \$15,000*" but not just "*\$15,000.*" Except if the sentence begins with a calendar year: *2008 marked the beginning of the technology age.*

## **Titles**

The rules regarding titles have to do with (1) capitalization and (2) whether to use quotation marks or not. Here are the basic rules:

1. With book titles, computer game titles, movie titles, opera titles, play titles, poem titles, song and CD titles, television program titles, and the titles of lectures, speeches and works of art: (1) Capitalize the principal words, including prepositions and conjunctions of four or more letters. (2) Capitalize an article – the, a, an – or words of fewer than four letters if it is the first or last word in a title. (3) Put **quotation marks** around the names of all such works. *The best song on the CD, "The Meaning of Love," is deep and rich.* (4) With song lyrics, use quotation marks with back slashes to denote different lines of lyrics: *"I love you girl/Gonna make me hurl/Watch a flag unfurl/Giving me a whirl."*
2. With the names of **publications** (newspapers, magazines, yearbooks), treat them as proper nouns, not titles. Capitalize the name of the publication, but **DO NOT put quotation marks** around it. *Huntley High School's yearbook is called Chieftain.* Pay attention to the words "the" and "magazine." These words should **ONLY** be capitalized if they're part of the official name. For instance, you'd say *The New Yorker* (because "The" is actually part of the publication's title), but *Time magazine* ("magazine" is not part of the name). *Forty students write for The Voice.*
3. Do not use quotation marks around such software titles as Windows.

Some rules about punctuation with titles:

1. Commas or periods which follow quoted materials are always included **inside** of the quotation marks. (*We listened to the song "Stairway to Heaven."*) Semicolons or colons always go **outside** the quotation marks unless they are part of the title.
2. Be careful with exclamation and question marks with quotation marks. Depending on how the question or exclamation mark is used, it may go outside or inside the quotation marks.
  - Did you watch television show "We Need Better Parents"? (The entire sentence is a question and the title is not a question: outside)
  - I watched the television show "Why Don't Our Parents Care?" (part of the title, goes inside the quotation marks)

## **Quotations:**

1. Direct quotations are for thoughts and opinions. . .not for facts. Paraphrase for facts. Thus, "*Huntley added 200 new students this year,*" said Hartman, should be, *According to Hartmann, 200 new students were added this year.* It's a fact. . .you don't need a direct quotation. But be sure to tell the reader where it came from. If your source is wrong, it will be that person who is wrong, not you.
2. If you are going to directly quote someone, put the attribution at the end, not the beginning. (NO: *Johnson said, "I really loved it."* YES: *"I really loved it," said Johnson.*)
3. In general, the form for quotations (punctuation especially) is the following: "*Quotations,*" said X. (*"I think we will definitely do better next year," said Johnson.*)
4. Don't get fancy. . .always use "**said**" for attribution, not other fancy words ("stated" "shouted" "articulated").

5. Break up quotations that are more than one sentence with an attribution after the first sentence: *"I could not believe the look on my mother's face," said Smith. "It was priceless."*
6. With students, always be sure to identify the student by class with the entire name the first time you quote them. After that, just use his/her last name. (*"I really enjoyed the trip," said junior Sally Williams. . . . "I'd definitely go again," said Williams.*)
7. Same goes for faculty. . . full name, identification the first time, just the last name after that. (*"I love teaching," said John Doherty, English teacher. . . . "They come up with new things every day," said Doherty.*)

### **Punctuation:**

- **Boys/Girls sports teams:** For this, do not use an apostrophe. *He was a member of the boys tennis team.*
- **Comma** -- Place a comma before and after the following when they appear in the middle of a sentence:
  - A year, if it follows a month and date. Example: *I was born on Nov. 6, 1958, in Madison, Wis.*
  - A state, if it follows a city or county name. Example: *I was born in Madison, Wis., on Nov. 6, 1958.*
  - An appositive, which means a word or phrase that says the same thing as a word or phrase next to it. Example: *I saw my boss, John McFeely, in the hall. (My boss and John McFeely are identical.) However do not place a comma after a title that precedes a name. Example: Executive Editor John McFeely died today.*

**NOTE:** In a list of three things, always use a comma. Consider this book dedication: *To my parents, Ayn Rand and God.* Goofy, unless your parents are Rand and God. Remove the ambiguity with a comma: *To my parents, Ayn Rand, and God.*

- **Great-:** Hyphenate *great-grandfather, great-great-grandmother*, etc. Use *great grandfather* only if the intended meaning is that the grandfather was a great man.
- **Possessives:** The main AP exception to Strunk and White's *Elements of Style* involves forming the possessive of a singular proper noun that ends in "s." AP says merely add an apostrophe. Examples: *Otis' cookies, Amos' ice cream, Charles' chips.* And here's a reminder of something I'm sure most of you already know: To make something that is singular into a possessive, add 's; to make something plural into a possessive, first make sure it is plural, usually by verifying that it ends in an "s," and then add an apostrophe. Here's a nonsense sentence that illustrates the idea: *One dog's bone is worth two dogs' ears.*

### **Common English Errors/Questions:**

- **ACCEPT/EXCEPT:** If you offer me Godiva chocolates I will gladly accept them--except for the candied violet ones. Just remember that the "X" in "except" excludes things--they tend to stand out, be different. In contrast, just look at those two cozy "Cs" snuggling up together. Very accepting. And be careful; when typing "except" it often comes out "expect."
- **ADVERSE/AVERSE:** *Adverse* means unfavorable: *He predicted adverse weather.* *Averse* means reluctant, opposed: *She is averse to change.*
- **AFFECT/EFFECT:** There are four distinct words here. When "affect" is accented on the final syllable (a-FECT), it is a verb meaning "have an influence on": *The million-dollar donation from the industrialist did not affect my vote against the Clean Air Act.* A much rarer meaning is indicated when the word is accented on the first syllable (AFF-etc.), meaning "emotion." In this case the word is used mostly by psychiatrists and social scientists-- people who normally know how to spell it. The real problem arises when people confuse the first spelling with the second: "effect." This too can be two different words. The more common one is a noun: *When I left the stove on, the effect was that the house was filled with smoke.* When you affect a situation, you have an effect on it. The less common is a verb meaning "to create": *I'm trying to effect a change in the way we purchase widgets.*



**NOTE:** Ninety-nine times out of 100, if the word you use is a verb, spell it with an "a," and if it is a noun, spell it with an "e." In these two usages, affect means to influence and effect means the result of an action -- and those are by far the most common uses. Examples? Student: *How will this affect (try substituting the word "influence") my grade?* Teacher: *I don't know what the effect (try substituting the word "result") will be.*

- **AGREEMENT ERRORS:** One of the more common grammar mistakes people make has to do with the agreement between the subject and verb in a sentence. Simply put, a singular noun should be matched with a singular verb; a plural noun should be matched with a plural verb. Seems simple. . .but people get confused sometimes. For example:

- The **box** *belongs* in the attic.
- The **box** of my mother's favorite Christmas ornaments *belongs* in the attic.

A lot of people would get confused by the prepositional phrase between "box" and "belongs" and perhaps change the verb to "belong" given the word "ornaments." Not so. The sentence is a simple one. . .don't let the words between the noun and the verb fool you.. Other examples:

- **Each** of the divers in the class *has* an oxygen tank.
- The team **captain**, as well as the other players, *is nervous*.
- The **woman** with all the dogs *walks* down the street.

Collective nouns are words that imply more than one person but that are considered singular and take a singular verb such as: group, team, committee, class, and family.

- The **team** *runs* during practice.
- The **committee** *decides* how to proceed.

- **A LA CARTE, A LA KING, A LA MODE**

- **ALOT, A LOT:** Perhaps this common spelling error began because there does exist in English a word spelled "alot" which is a verb meaning to apportion or grant. The correct form, with "a" and "lot" separated by a space is perhaps not often encountered in print because formal writers usually use other expressions such as "a great deal," "often," etc. If you can't remember the rule, just remind yourself that just as you wouldn't write "alittle" you shouldn't write "alot."
- **ALRIGHT, ALL RIGHT:** The correct form of this phrase has become so rare in the popular press that many readers have probably never noticed that it is actually two words. But if you want to avoid irritating traditionalists you'd better tell them that you feel "all right" rather than "alright."
- **ALUMNUS, ALUMNI, ALUMNA, ALUMNAE:** Use *alumnus* (*alumni* in the plural) when referring to a man who has attended a school. Use *alumna* (*alumnae* in the plural) for similar references to a woman.
- **ANXIOUS/EAGER:** Most people use "anxious" interchangeably with "eager," but its original meaning had to do with worrying, being full of anxiety. Perfectly correct phrases like "anxious to please" obscure the nervous tension implicit in this word and lead people to say less correct things like "I'm anxious for Christmas morning to come so I can open my presents." Traditionalists frown on anxiety-free anxiousness. Say instead you are eager for or looking forward to a happy event.
- **ANYMORE, ANY MORE:** It's two words: "any more" as in *We do not sell bananas any more*.
- **A WHILE/AWHILE:** When "awhile" is spelled as a single word, it is an adverb meaning "for a time" ("stay awhile"); but when "while" is the object of a prepositional phrase, like "Lend me your monkey wrench for a while" the "while"

must be separated from the "a." (But if the preposition "for" were lacking in this sentence, "awhile" could be used in this way: *Lend me your monkey wrench awhile.*)

- **BASED ON/OFF:** To say something is dependent on something else, use 'based on'. A base is the bottom, so nothing is ever based off or around something.
- **BETTER (TWO)/BEST (MORE THAN TWO):** *Of the two hitters, I like him better. He is the best outfielder on the team (for the un-American, a baseball team has three outfielders. . .)*
- **BETWEEN (TWO)/AMONG (MORE THAN TWO):** *The loot was shared equally between the two brothers. The loot was shared equally among the five brothers.*
- **CELL PHONE:** Not cellphone or cell-phone.
- **COLLECTIVE NOUNS:** Nouns that denote a unit take singular verbs and pronouns: *class, committee, crowd, family, group, herd, jury, orchestra, team.*  
Some usage examples: *The committee is meeting to set its agenda. The jury reached its verdict. A herd of cattle was sold.*  
Team names take plural verbs. *The Miami Heat are battling for the league's worst record.*  
Band names take plural or singular verbs, depending on the form of the band's name: *The Mamas and the Papas were one of the best groups of the 70s. Metallica is my favorite band.*  
PLURAL IN FORM: Some words that are plural in form become collective nouns and take singular verbs when the group or quantity is regarded as a unit.  
Right: *A thousand bushels is a good yield. (a unit)* Right: *A thousand bushels were created. (individual items)*  
Right: *The data is sound. (a unit)* Right: *The data have been carefully collected. (individual items)*
- **COMPARED TO, COMPARED WITH:** Use *compared to* when the intent is to assert, without the need for elaboration, that two or more items are similar: *She compared her work for women's rights to Susan B. Anthony's campaign for women's suffrage.*  
Use *compared with* when juxtaposing two or more items to illustrate similarities and/or differences: *His time was 2:11:10, compared with 2:14 for his closest competitor.*
- **COMPLEMENTARY, COMPLIMENTARY:** Complementary means "combining to enhance each other's qualities." (*The husband and wife have complementary careers.*) Complimentary means (1) expressing praise (*a complimentary remark*) or (2) free as a courtesy or favor (*complimentary tickets*).
- **DANGLING MODIFIERS:** Avoid modifiers that do not refer clearly and logically to some word in the sentence.  
Dangling: *Taking our seats, the game started.* (*Taking* does not refer to the subject, *game*, nor to any other word in the sentence). Correct: *Taking our seats, we watched the opening of the game.* (*Taking* refers to *we*, the subject of the sentence).
- **DIALECT:** the form of language peculiar to a region or a group, usually in matters of pronunciation or syntax. Dialect should be avoided, even in quoted matter, unless it is clearly pertinent to a story. There are some words and phrases in everyone's vocabulary that are typical of a particular region or group. Quoting dialect, unless used carefully, implies substandard or illiterate usage. When there is a compelling reason to use dialect, words or phrases are spelled phonetically, and apostrophes show missing letters and sounds: *"Din't ya yoosta live at Toidy-Toid Street and Secun' Amya? Across from da moom pitchers."*
- **DRUNK, DRUNKEN:** *Drunk* is the spelling of the adjective used after a form of the verb *to be*: *He was drunk. Drunken* is the spelling of the adjective used before nouns: *a drunken driver, drunken driving.* 'Drunk' is always used with a helping verb, while 'drank' can stand alone: *I have drunk, I drank.*

- **EITHER:** Use it to mean one or the other, not “both.” *Right: She said to use either door. Wrong: There were lions on either side of the door. Right: There were lions on each side of the door. (There were lions on both sides of the door.)*
- **EITHER. . .OR, NEITHER. . .NOR:** The nouns that follow these words do not constitute a compound subject; they are alternate subjects and require a verb that agrees with the nearer subject: *Neither they nor he is going. Neither he nor they are going.*
- **EMINENT, IMMINENT:** Eminent means of high standing (*He is an eminent poet.*); imminent means about to happen (*The thunderstorm seemed imminent*).
- **ENSURE, INSURE:** Use ensure to mean guarantee: *Steps were taken to ensure accuracy.* Use insure for references to insurance: *The policy insures his life.*
- **EVERYDAY:** “Everyday” is a perfectly good adjective, as in “I’m most comfortable in my everyday clothes.” The problem comes when people turn the adverbial phrase “every day” into a single word. It is incorrect to say “I take a shower everyday.” It should be “I take a shower every day.”
- **FARTHER, FURTHER:** *Farther* refers to physical distance: *He walked farther into the woods.* *Further* refers to an extension of time or degree: *She will look further into the mystery.*
- **FEWER, LESS:** Use fewer for things that you can count. Example: I have fewer quarters than you do. (You can count, “One quarter, two quarters, three quarters.”) Use less for things you cannot count. Example: I have less cash than you do. (You don’t say, “One cash, two cash, three cash.”)
- **FRESHMEN/MAN:** It is the Freshman Academy, but it is full of freshmen. Everyone confuses this word in our articles, pay attention people!
- **GOOD/WELL:** “Good” is the adjective, “well” is the adverb. You do something well, but you give someone something good. The exception is verbs of sensation in phrases such as “the pie smells good,” or “I feel good.” Despite the arguments of niggers, this is standard usage. Saying “the pie smells well” would imply that the pastry in question had a nose. Similarly, “I feel well” is also generally acceptable; but it is not the only correct usage.
- **HIS, HER:** Do not presume maleness in constructing a sentence, but use the pronoun *his* when an indefinite antecedent may be male or female: *A reporter tries to protect his sources (Not his or her sources, but not the use of the word reporter rather than newsman).* Frequently, however, the best choice is a slight revision of the sentence: *Reporters try to protect their sources.* NOTE that “reporter” (singular) matches “his” (also singular) and “Reporters” (plural) matches “their” (plural too).
- **HYPHENS:** Hyphenate adjectives with nouns that end with –ed, nouns with participles that end in –ing, and when an adjective modifies another adjective: *hot-headed, thrill-seeking, light-green.* Fractions used as adjectives are hyphenated, but fractions used as nouns are not.
- **I/ME/MYSELF:** The most common problem here is the use of “myself.” Take this sentence: “If you have any questions, ask Jane or myself”. This is wrong. To see how obviously wrong it is, just take Jane out: “If you have any questions, ask myself”. It seems that many people think that “myself” is like an intensified version of “me.” So how do we use “myself” correctly? “Myself” is only used when “I” has already been used. For example: “I washed myself” or “I put half of the cake away for myself.” This is the only time it is ever used. The same rules apply for “herself” and “himself.”

The difference between “I” and “me” is the same as that shown in who/whom below. “I” is the “doer” and “me” is the “done to”. For example:

- I paid the tax department.
- The tax department paid *me*.

Things get a bit more confusing when you add a second person, but the rule is exactly the same:

- Jim and I paid our taxes.
- The tax department gave refunds to Jim and *me*.

- **IN/INTO:** *In* indicates location: *He was in the room.* *Into* indicates motion: *She walked into the room.*
- **IN REGARD TO/WITH REGARD TO:** Use either of these constructions when meaning “concerning” or “in reference to”: *The law should be clearer with regard to what is and is not a disability.* DO NOT USE “with regards” or “in regards to” for this.

“Regards” with an “s,” is fine if we’re talking about warm thoughts, the sort George M. Cohan was sending to Broadway (“Give My Regards to Broadway”). (The specific phrase using “with” seems most appropriate for the end of a letter, as in “With regards to Aunt Mary, Love, Tommy.”)

- **IRONIC/IRONY:** I have a thing about the words “irony” or “ironic”. . .so many people use it and yet many don’t seem to understand what it means. When something is “ironic,” it is “The use of words to convey the opposite of their literal meaning; a statement or situation where the meaning is contradicted by the appearance or presentation of the idea.” There are three different forms of irony:

**1. Verbal irony:** This is when the speaker says one thing but means another (often contrary) thing. The most well known type of verbal irony is sarcasm. For example: “He is as funny as cancer.”

**2. Dramatic Irony:** In drama, this type of irony is when the spectator is given a piece of information that one or more of the characters are unaware of. For example: in *Pygmalion*, we know that Eliza is a prostitute, but the Higgins family don’t. It can also be an incongruity between what is expected and what actually occurs. If the hero leans in to kiss the damsel, but he then pushes her off a cliff, that’s dramatic irony.

**3. Situational Irony:** Situational irony is when there is a difference between the expected result and the actual result. Take for example this account of the attempted assassination of Ronald Reagan: “As aides rushed to push Reagan into his car, the bullet ricocheted off the [bullet-proof] car, then hit the President in the chest, grazed a rib and lodged in his lung, just inches from his heart.” The bullet proof car – intended to protect the president, nearly caused his death by deflecting the bullet.

**NOTE:** If you get an invitation to a friend’s birthday and it’s on the same day as your birthday party, **THAT’S NOT IRONIC!!** That’s just a bummer.

- **ITS/IT'S:** It’s = it is. *It’s a nice day.* Its is possessive. *The badger came out of its den.*
- **LAY, LIE:** Not as tricky as it might seem. The way I remember the difference is that “lay,” in the present tense, requires an object; in other words (pardon me) you can only “lay” something. The word “lie” in the present tense means recline on a horizontal plane. Examples in the present tense: *I lay the book on the table. Now it lies there.* In the past tense, *lay* becomes *laid*, and *lie* becomes *lay*. Examples: *I laid the book on the table yesterday. It lay there for several hours before my brother picked it up.*
- **LESS/FEWER:** The difference between less and fewer is that one is used in reference to “number” – things you can count, and the other in reference to “amount” – things measured in bulk. For example, you can’t count sand, so if we want to empty a hole filled with sand, we say “we need less sand in that hole” – but if we want to empty a hole filled with eggs, we say “we need fewer eggs in that hole”. There are other words that follow the same rule:

“A great quantity of sand” – “A great number of eggs”  
“We should remove a little sand” – “We should remove a few eggs”  
“There is too much sand” – “There are too many eggs”

If you eat too *many* ice-creams, people might think you have eaten too *much* dessert.

We commonly see this error crop up with regard to people: “We need less people on this team” – this should actually be “we need fewer people on this team”.

Measurements of time and money ignore this rule, therefore we say: “I have less than 5 dollars” and “It takes less than 2 hours to get to Paris.”

- **OVER/MORE:** *Over* generally refers to spatial relationships: *The plane flew over the city.* *More* than is preferred with numerals: *Their salaries went up more than \$20 a week.*

**NOTE:** This applies to **UNDER/LESS THAN** as well. *Under* refers to spatial relationships: *The plane flew under the radar.* *Less than* is preferred with numerals: *She made less than \$2,000 this summer.*

- **NUMBER/AMOUNT:** Use ‘number’ when the quantity can be counted, but ‘amount’ when it can be measured. (*a large amount of water and a great number of pencils*). ‘Few’, ‘fewer’ and ‘many’ go with numbers of items, while ‘little’, ‘less’, and ‘much’ go with amounts. (*She ate fewer cookies than Charlie and drank less milk.*) ‘More’ can be used in either category.
- **ON TO/ONTO:** “Onto” and “on to” are often interchangeable, but not always. Consider the effect created by wrongly using “onto” in the following sentence when “on to” is meant: “We’re having hors d’oeuvres in the garden, and for dinner moving onto the house.” If the “on” is part of an expression like “moving on” it can’t be shoved together with a “to” that just happens to follow it.
- **PLURALS:** Follow these guidelines in forming and using plural words:
  - Most words: Add *s*: *boys, girls, ships, villages.*
  - Words ending in *CH, S, SH, SS, X AND Z*: Add *es*: *churches, lenses, parishes, glasses, boxes, buzzes.* (*Monarchs* is an exception).
  - Words ending in *is*: Change *is* to *es*: *oases, parentheses, theses.*
  - Words ending in *Y*: If *y* is preceded by a consonant or *qu*, change *y* to *i* and add *es*: *armies, cities, navies, soliloquies.* Otherwise, add *s*: *donkeys, monkeys.*
  - Words ending in *O*: If *o* is preceded by a consonant, most plurals require *es*: *buffaloes, dominoes, echoes, heroes, potatoes.* But there are exceptions: *pianos.*
  - Words ending in *F*: In general, change *f* to *v* and add *es*: *leaves, selves* (*Roof, roofs* is an exception).
  - Latin endings: Latin root words ending in *us* change *us* to *i*: *alumnus, alumni.* Most ending in *a* change to *ae*: *alumna, alumnae* (*formula, formulas* is an exception). Most ending in *um* add *s*: *memorandums, referendums, stadiums.* Among those that still use the Latin ending: *addenda, curricula, media.*
  - Form change: *man, men; child, children; foot, feet; mouse, mice;* etc.
  - Words the same in singular and plural: *corps, chassis, deer, moose, sheep,* etc.
  - Compound words: Those written solid add *s* at the end: *cupfuls, handfuls, tablespoonfuls.* For those that involve separate words or words linked by a hyphen, make the most significant word plural: *adjutants general, aides-de-camp, attorneys general, daughters-in-law, passers-by, postmasters general, presidents-elect, secretaries general, sergeants major.* Significant word last: *assistant attorneys, assistant corporation counsels, deputy sheriffs, major generals.*
  - Proper names: Most ending in *es* or *s* or *z* add *es*: *Charleses, Joneses, Gonzalezes.* Most ending in *y* add *s* even if preceded by a consonant: *the Duffys, the Kennedys, the two Kansas Citys.* Exceptions include *Alleghenies* and *Rockies.* For others, add *s*: *the Carters, the McCoys, the Mondales.*

- Figures: Add s: *The custom began in the 1920s. The airline had two 727s. Temperatures will be in the low 20s. There were five size 7s.*
  - Single letters: Use 's: *Mind your p's and q's. He learned the three R's and brought home a report card with four A's and two B's. The Oakland A's won the pennant.*
  - Multiple letters: Add s: *She knows her ABCs. I gave him five IOUs. Four VIPs were there.*
- **PRINCIPAL/PRINCIPLE:** The principal is your pal. . .right? "Principal Dave Johnson" is the correct usage for this. It's a person in charge of the school. "Principle" is only a noun, and has to do with law or doctrine: "The workers fought hard for the principle of collective bargaining."
  - **PROFANITIES, OBSCENITIES, VULGARITY:** Do not use them in stories unless they are part of direct quotations and there is a compelling reason for them. Try to find a way to give the reader a sense of what was said without using the specific word or phrase.
  - **QUOTATION/QUOTE:** The word quote is a verb (*He quoted Shakespeare*); the word quotation is a noun (*It's my favorite quotation.*). **WRONG:** "*It's my favorite quote.*"
  - **REDUNDANCY:** Journalism is about getting to your point and making it, without any extra words/phrases that are not needed. Here are some of the most common examples of redundancies, or, as my college writing professor (Edward Cronin) called them, "dead corpses." The following list I got from [dailywritingtips.com](http://dailywritingtips.com); they are 50 of the most common redundancies:
    1. **Absolutely certain or sure/essential/guaranteed:** Someone who is certain or sure is already without doubt. Something that is essential is intrinsically absolute. A guarantee is by nature absolute (or should be). Abandon *absolutely* in such usage.
    2. **Actual experience/fact:** An experience is something that occurred (unless otherwise indicated). A fact is something confirmed to have happened. *Actual* is extraneous in these instances.
    3. **Add an additional:** To add is to provide another of something. *Additional* is extraneous.
    4. **Added bonus:** A bonus is an extra feature, so *added* is redundant.
    5. **Advance notice/planning/reservations/warning:** Notices, planning, reservations, and warnings are all, by their nature, actions that occur before some event, so qualifying such terms with *advance* is superfluous.
    6. **As for example:** As implies that an example is being provided, so omit "an example."
    7. **Ask a question:** To ask is to pose a question, so *question* is redundant.
    8. **At the present time:** "At present" means "at this time," so avoid the verbose version.
    9. **Basic fundamentals/essentials:** Fundamentals and essentials are by their nature elementary, so remove *basic* from each phrase.
    10. **(Filled to) capacity:** Something filled is done so to capacity, so describing something as "filled to capacity" is repetitive.
    11. **Came at a time when:** *When* provides the necessary temporal reference to the action of coming; "at a time" is redundant.
    12. **Close proximity/scrutiny:** *Proximity* means "close in location," and *scrutiny* means "close study," so avoid qualifying these terms with *close*.
    13. **Collaborate/join/meet/merge together:** If you write of a group that collaborates or meets together, you imply that there's another way to collect or confer. To speak of joining or merging together is, likewise, redundant.
    14. **Completely filled/finished/opposite:** Something that is filled or finished is thoroughly so; *completely* is redundant. Something that is opposite isn't necessarily diametrically opposed, especially in qualitative connotations, but the modifier is still extraneous.
    15. **Consensus of opinion:** A consensus is an agreement but not necessarily one about an opinion, so "consensus of opinion" is not purely redundant, but the phrase "of opinion" is usually unnecessary.

16. **(During the) course (of):** *During* means “in or throughout the duration of”), so “during the course of” is repetitive.
17. **Definite decision:** Decisions may not be final, but when they are made, they are unequivocal and therefore definite, so one should not be described as “a definite decision.”
18. **Difficult dilemma:** A dilemma is by nature complicated, so omit *difficult* as a modifier.
19. **Direct confrontation:** A confrontation is a head-on conflict. *Direct* as a qualifier in this case is redundant.
20. **End result:** A result is something that occurs at the end, so omit *end* as a modifier of *result*.
21. **Enter in:** To enter is to go in, so throw *in* out.
22. **Estimated at about/roughly:** An estimate is an approximation. *About* and *roughly* are superfluous.
23. **False pretense:** A pretense is a deception, so *false* is redundant.
24. **Few in number:** *Few* refers to a small number; do not qualify *few* with the modifier “in number.”
25. **Final outcome:** An outcome is a result and is therefore intrinsically final.
26. **First began, new beginning:** A beginning is when something first occurs, so *first* and *new* are superfluous terms in these cases.
27. **For a period/number of days:** *Days* is plural, so a duration is implied; “a period of” or “a number of” is redundant. It’s better to specify the number of days or to generalize with *many*.
28. **Foreign imports:** Imports are products that originate in another country, so their foreign nature is implicit and the word *foreign* is redundant.
29. **Forever and ever:** *Ever* is an unnecessary reduplication of *forever*.
30. **Free gift:** A gift is by definition free (though cynics will dispute that definition), so *free* is extraneous.
31. **Invited guests:** Guests are intrinsically those who have an invitation, so *invited* is redundant.
32. **Major breakthrough:** A breakthrough is a significant progress in an effort. Though *major* is not directly redundant, the notable nature of the event is implicit.
33. **[Number] a.m. in the morning/p.m. in the evening:** The abbreviations a.m. and p.m. already identify the time of day, so omit “in the morning” or “in the evening.”
34. **Past history/record:** A history is by definition a record of past occurrences, and a record is documentation of what has already happened. In both cases, *past* is redundant.
35. **Plan ahead:** To plan is to prepare for the future. *Ahead* is extraneous.
36. **Possibly might:** Might indicates probability, so omit the redundant qualifier *possibly*.
37. **Postpone until later:** To postpone is to delay. *Later* is superfluous.
38. **Protest against:** To protest is to communicate opposition. *Against* is redundant.
39. **Repeat again:** To repeat is to reiterate an action, so *again* is unnecessary.
40. **Revert back:** Something that reverts returns to an earlier state. *Back* is superfluous.
41. **Same identical:** *Same* and *identical* are just that (and that). Omit *same* as a qualifier for *identical*.
42. **Since the time when:** *Since* indicates a time in the past; “the time when” is superfluous.
43. **Spell out in detail:** To spell out is to provide details, so “in detail” is repetitive.
44. **Still remains:** Something that remains is still in place. *Still* is redundant.
45. **Suddenly exploded:** An explosion is an immediate event. It cannot be any more sudden than it is.
46. **Therapeutic treatment:** *Treatment* in the sense of medical care is by nature therapeutic, so the adjective is redundant.
47. **Unexpected surprise:** No surprise is expected, so the modifier is extraneous.
48. **Unintended mistake:** A mistake is an inadvertently erroneous action. The lack of intention is implicit.
49. **Usual custom:** A custom is something routinely and repeatedly done or observed, and *usual* is redundant.
50. **Written down:** Something written has been taken down. *Down* is superfluous.

- **THAN/THEN:** When comparing one thing with another you may find that one is more appealing "than" another. "Than" is the word you want when doing comparisons. But if you are talking about time, choose "then": "First you separate the eggs; then you beat the whites." Alexis is smarter than I, not "then I."
  - **THAT/WHICH:** This one always confuses me. Here's two different explanations. . .same thing but formulated differently with different examples:
    - a. If you are defining something by distinguishing it from a larger class of which it is a member, use "that": "I chose the lettuce that had the fewest wilted leaves." When the general class is not being limited or defined in some way, then "which" is appropriate: "He made an iceberg Caesar salad, which didn't taste quite right."
    - b. "That" restricts the reader's thought, directing attention to a specific bit of information to complete a message's meaning. "Which" is non-restrictive and introduces subsidiary rather than essential information to the meaning of the sentence. Examples:
      - *The lawnmower that is in the garage needs sharpening.* (We have more than one lawnmower. Only the one in the garage needs sharpening).
      - *The lawnmower, which is in the garage, needs sharpening.* (We have only one lawnmower. It's in the garage and needs sharpening).
      - *The statue that stands in the hall is on loan from the museum.* (A number of statues are in the building. Only the one in the hall is on loan from the museum).
      - *The statue, which stands in the hall, is on loan from the museum.* (Only one statue is under discussion. It is on loan from the museum and happens to be in the hall).
  - **THAT/WHO:** *Who* refers to people. *That* and *which* (see above) refer to groups or things. *Anya is the one who rescued the bird. He took care of the children who were sick. Lydia is the woman who married my father. Dennis is on the team that won first place. She belongs to an organization that specializes in saving endangered species.*
  - **THEY'RE/THEIR/THERE:** They're = "they are." If you've written "they're," ask yourself whether you can substitute "they are." If not, you've made a mistake. "Their" is a possessive pronoun like "her" or "our": "They eat their hotdogs with sauerkraut." Everything else is "there." "There goes the ball, out of the park! See it? Right there! There aren't very many home runs like that."
  - **UNIQUE:** It means one of a kind. Do not describe something as *rather unique, most unique or very unique.*
  - **USE TO, USED TO:** Because the D and the T are blended into a single consonant when this phrase is pronounced, many writers are unaware that the D is even present and omit it in writing. Correct form? Used to.
  - **UNDER/LESS THAN:** Just like **OVER/MORE THAN** rule above, *Under* refers to spatial relationships: *The plane flew under the radar. Less than* is preferred with numerals: *She made less than \$2,000 this summer.*
- NOTE:** An exception to this rule is a sentence regarding *temperature*. We say "below zero" not "less than zero," probably because temperature levels were primarily read using mercury thermometers.
- **VERBS:** Split forms: In general, avoid awkward constructions that split infinitive forms of a verb (to leave, to help, etc.) or compound forms (had left, are found out, etc.)
 

Awkward: *She was ordered to immediately leave on an assignment.* Preferred: *She was ordered to leave immediately on an assignment.*

Awkward: *There stood the wagon that we had early last autumn left by the barn.* Preferred: *There stood the wagon that we had left by the barn early last summer.*



Occasionally, however, a split is not awkward and is necessary to convey the meaning: *He wanted to really help his mother. Those who lie are often found out. How has your health been? The budget was tentatively approved.*

- **WHO/WHOM:** This particular error has become so common that it is beginning to look like the word “whom” may vanish entirely from the English language. The reason for this is that so many people have no idea what the difference is. The difference is a simple one: who “does” the action, and whom has the action “done” to them. We use this difference in other words – “I” and “me” for example. “who” is the equivalent of “I”, and “whom” is the equivalent of “me”. The technical term for this difference is noun case – “who” is the nominative case, and “whom” is the accusative. Here is an example of correct usage:


*Who* is going to kill Bob? (*I* am going to kill Bob)

Bob is going to be killed by *whom*? (Bob is going to be killed by *me*)

- **YOUR/YOURE:** "You're" is always a contraction of "you are." If you've written "you're," try substituting "you are." If it doesn't work, the word you want is "your." Your writing will improve if you're careful about this.


A straight line | or hatchmark # between letters or words means to add a space:


Students eat a lot of pizza.

This mark , used alone or with a delete mark, means to close up space.

I wear my every day clothes every day. Apartement

A series of dots . . . . under a word or passage and/or the word "stet" (let it stand) means leave as it was before the correction.

 Retain ~~erased out~~ portion of text.

This mark  means to transpose letters, words or punctuation:

Transpose these letters words and

Use a circle  to indicate:

Abbreviation: Colonel Smith

No abbreviation: the col. said


Use figure: six hundred

Spell out figure: She had 5 daughters

Indent for paragraph. This mark ¶ also means to add a new paragraph. NO ¶ means don't indent.

A caret ^ shows where a corrected or substituted letter, word, phrase or punctuation should be inserted:

sup<sup>o</sup>pose      The whole <sup>comprises</sup> ~~is comprised of~~ many parts.

The delete  mark indicates text or punctuation to be deleted:

Character, as ~~my~~ dad used to say, is the ability ~~to~~ to eat just one peanut.

A stroke / through a capital letter indicates it should be lower case:


Stephen L. Weber, /<sup>lc.</sup> President of San Diego State University,

Three lines ≡ under a lowercase letter indicate the letter should be capitalized:

≡ president Stephen L. Weber

A single underline    or ital means to set the word(s) in italics:

Have you ever seen Gone with the Wind?

A wavy line  under text means to set in boldface:

I have never seen *Gone with the Wind*.

## COPY EDITING

Indent for new paragraph

<sup>no ¶</sup> No paragraph (in margin)

Run in or bring  
copy together

Join words: week end

Insert a <sup>single</sup> word or phrase

Insert a <sup>s</sup> missing letter

Take out an extra letter

Transpose words two

Transpose <sup>few</sup> letters

Make Letter lower case

Capitalize columbia

Indicate italic letters

Indicate small capitals

Indicate <sup>bf</sup> bold face type

Abbreviate January 30

Spell out abbrev.

Spell out number 9

Make figures of thirteen

Separate run together words

Join letters in a word

Insert period ○

Insert comma ↗

Insert quotation marks “ ”

Take out ~~some~~ word

Don't make <sup>STET</sup> ~~this~~ correction

Mark centering [like this]

Indent copy from both sides  
by using these marks [ ]

Indent copy on left

Spell name Smyth as written

or

Spell name <sup>fc</sup> Smyth as written

There's more story: MORE

This ends story: ## 30

Do not obliterate copy;  
mark it out ~~with a thin~~  
~~line~~ so it can be com-  
pared with editing.

Mark in hyphen: =

Mark in dash: |—|

ā and ū

ō and ñ