

Style Guide for Written Work

Earlham's *Style Guide for Written Work* is the College's official style manual for publications targeting media and other external and internal audiences. For questions not covered below, use the *Associated Press Stylebook*. All Earlham communications professionals should keep an updated copy of the AP Stylebook on their desks. As with the AP, use *Webster's New World College Dictionary* as a guide.

This document is not intended to guide all writing at Earlham, only the writing originating in administrative offices. Writing for courses or for scholarly publications should, of course, comply with the appropriate academic style manuals.

abbreviations in running text

In general, do not use abbreviations in parentheses following the name of an organization, program, etc. Assume that the reader can make the connection between the full name of the organization, for example, and the abbreviation that may be used on second reference.

academic and professional titles

From AP: Capitalize and spell out formal titles such as *president, dean, director, etc.*, when they precede a name. Lowercase elsewhere.

Lowercase modifiers such as *department* in *department Convener Jerome Wiesner*.

academic year

Denote as 2026-27, not 2026-2027.

addresses

From AP: use the abbreviations *Ave., Blvd., and St.* only with a numbered address: 801 National Rd. W. Spell them out and capitalize when part of a formal street name without a street number: *National Road*. Lowercase and spell out when used alone or with more than one street name: *National Road and College Avenue*.

All similar words (*alley, drive, road, terrace, etc.*) always are spelled out. Capitalize them when part of a formal name without a number; lowercase when used alone or with two or more names.

Always use figures for an address number: *801 National Rd. W.*

Spell out and capitalize *First* through *Ninth* when used as street names; use figures with two letters for *10th* and above: *7 Fifth Ave., 100 21st St.*

advisor/adviser

While both are correct, use *adviser*.

after-hour/after-hours

Use the s, so “after-hours emergencies.”

All-America, All-American

Regarding references to All-America/All-American:

Use *All-American* when referring specifically to an individual:

NCAA DIII All-American Karen King, or She is an All-American.

Use *All-America* when referring to the team or status:

NCAA DIII All-America team, or NCAA DIII All-America selection

Board of Trustees

Use uppercase when referring to Earlham’s governing body.

building names

Refer to student quarters as residence halls, not dormitories.

cabinet

From AP: Capitalize references to a specific body of advisers heading executive departments for a president, king, governor, etc.: *The president-elect said she has not made her Cabinet selections.*

The capital letter distinguishes the word from the common noun meaning cupboard, which is lowercase.

capitalization

In general, downstyle, as with the AP. Reserve capitalization for proper nouns and proper names, but not their derivatives. Exceptions to the capitalization rules include documents such as programs, posters, invitations, business cards, business letters, directories, addresses, captions, and other similar lists/formats with names and titles. Even in those cases, words which are otherwise lowercase remain so when appearing in running text rather than in isolated lines, lists, etc.

College

Always capitalize the word “college” when it refers to Earlham College specifically.

caption/cutline

For the *Earlhamite*, the first sentence of a caption should be written in the present tense and subsequent sentences should be in the past tense. The rationale is that the first sentence tells the reader what is happening in the photo. Subsequent sentences tell the context and background for what happened. Example:

Abdullah Brown carries Tom Wilson from his canoe. Wilson's ankle was broken during an ill-fated jump across a creek during August Wilderness.

co-

Retain the hyphen when forming nouns, adjectives and verbs that indicate occupation or status: co-author, co-chairman, co-pilot, co-host, co-owner, co-partner-co-star.

committee

Lowercase alone but capitalize proper name: He is a member of the Committee for Faculty and Staff Wellness.

collective nouns

When referring to teams, choirs, etc., use the collective noun. Nouns that denote a unit take singular verbs and pronouns: *class, committee, crowd, family, group, herd, jury, orchestra, team.*

college and university names

Generally avoid placing "The" before the name of a college or university unless it is an official part of the institution's name. Some colleges and universities, however, have added "The" to their names (The Ohio State University, The University of Michigan, The University of Alabama). Use the listed names at the Association of American Colleges and Universities (<http://www.aacu.org/membership/list.cfm>) as a guide or consult the Web site of the university in question. Two reference texts, *American Universities and Colleges* and *International Handbook of Universities*, may also be used.

comma

Omit the comma in a series before *and* or *or*. Example: Students were required to wear gloves, safety goggles and boots.

composition titles

With the exception of book and journal titles, see AP for complete detail. Book and journal titles should be italicized unless the document being produced is a news release.

For computer game titles, movie titles, opera titles, play titles, poem titles, song titles, television program titles, and the titles of lectures, speeches and works of art:

Capitalize the principal words, including prepositions and conjunctions of four or more letters.

Capitalize an article—*the, a, an*—or words of fewer than four letters if it is the first or last word in a title.

Put quotation marks around the names of all such works except the Bible and books that are primarily catalogs of reference material. In addition to catalogs, this category includes almanacs, directories, dictionaries, encyclopedias, gazetteers, handbooks and similar publications. Do not use quotation marks around such software titles as WordPerfect or Windows.

class year/graduation year

Uppercase the c in Class of XXXX. The AP actually writes this both ways, upper and lowercase, but Earlham will go with uppercase.

When noting graduation years with alumni names in College publications, follow this standard: When an alumni member's name first appears in the article, the graduation year is noted unless the article otherwise states the graduation year information. Typically, this information is not noted in press releases or other publications that are aimed at the public in general.

Use an apostrophe and the last two digits of the graduation year, for example:

Robert Sempoli '98

For listing married couples and alumni whose surname has changed:

Christina Brown '96 Rader
James '98 and Susan Saunder '99 Black

In running text, write to avoid use of multiple graduation-year designations for a person. When listing people, however, follow these examples for those who have graduated from Earlham's graduate schools (GPE and ESR), Earlham's graduate school or when an alum has graduated multiple times from Earlham:

Polly Smith '91 ESR '96
Johanna Schulz '66 GPE '85
Doug Hernandez GPE '99 ESR '01

Regarding current year of study of a student at Earlham, use first-year instead of freshman. Instead of upperclassmen, use upper-level.

couple

When used in the sense of two people, the word takes plural verbs and pronouns: *The couple were married Saturday and left Sunday on their honeymoon. They will return in two weeks.*

course names

Lowercase when describing courses, subjects, or areas of study in general. Capitalize the specific course or program. Specific courses mentioned in publications must match the titles used in the university catalogs.

He is enrolled in an American history course.

Some of our course offerings are not often seen at other small liberal arts colleges, including Psychology of Happiness, Cradle and Grave, Psychology of Sustainability, Psychoactive Drugs and Behavior, and Human Sexuality.

course numbers and abbreviations

Use the all-caps abbreviation and number consistent with the name as it is displayed on Earlham's website:

BIOL 306, CS 151

course work

Two words.

courtesy titles

From AP: Don't use them (Mrs., Ms., Mr.) if they can be avoided.

dates

From AP: When giving a date, use Arabic figures without *st*, *nd*, *rd*, or *th* (ordinals). See also **months**. Do not use the word on before a date unless excluding it would be confusing. If there is a case when an ordinal is needed, do not use superscript.

days of the week

From AP: Capitalize them. Do not abbreviate except in tabular format.

decades

From AP: use Arabic figures to indicate decades of history. Use an apostrophe to indicate numerals that are left out; show plural by adding the letter *s*: *the 1890s, the '90s*.

degrees

Adapted from AP: If mention of degrees is necessary to establish someone's credentials, the preferred form is to avoid an abbreviation and use instead a phrase such as: John Jones, who has a doctorate in psychology. Use an apostrophe in bachelor's degree, a master's, etc., but there is no possessive in Bachelor of Arts or Master of Science.

Also: an associate degree (no possessive).

Until about 1960 Earlham gave the A.B. degree instead of the B.A. degree. A.B. is Latin for "Artis Bacheloris." Earlham's earliest degrees were granted in Latin.

Abbreviations of Earlham degrees always use periods:

B.A.
M.A.T.
M.Ed.
M.A.
M.Min.
M.Div.

Use such abbreviations as B.A., M.A., LL.D. and Ph.D. only when the need to identify many individuals by degree on first reference would make the preferred form cumbersome. Use these abbreviations only after a full name—never after just a last name.

When used after a name, an academic abbreviation is set off by commas: John Snow, Ph.D., spoke.

Do not precede a name with a courtesy title for an academic degree and follow it with the abbreviation for the degree in the same reference:

Wrong: Dr. Pam Jones, Ph.D.
Right: Pam Jones, Ph.D.
Right: Dr. Pam Jones, a chemist.

Note: AP allows three degrees to be abbreviated without periods: MFA, BFA and MBA.

When referring to someone studying in a certain academic area and graduating from Earlham, use this as a model for capitalization:

Johnson earned a Bachelor of Arts in exercise science while at Earlham. (Not:
Johnson earned a Bachelor of Arts in Exercise Science while at Earlham.)

Saying "Peters earned a Bachelor of Arts in biology" is a way of stating the major informally. The only degree earned is the Bachelor of Arts.

departments/administrative offices

We do not capitalize majors or minors, but we do uppercase the name of the field of study/academic area when referring to the department. So, for example: Jill is a biology major.

She is taking biology courses. But: The Biology Department is holding its annual awards ceremony. Or, the Department of Biology has strict lab safety guidelines. Offices of the College are also uppercase: Office of Marketing and Communications.

dormitories

Refer to as residence halls in all publications.

earth

According to AP: Generally lowercase; capitalize when used as the proper name of the planet. *She is down-to-earth. How does the pattern apply to Mars, Jupiter, Earth, the sun and the moon? The astronauts returned to Earth. He hopes to move heaven and earth.*

EC/Earlham College

Do not use EC in any public-facing material. EC is acceptable only in on-campus, informal correspondence.

ellipses

Try to avoid using ellipses to indicate that part of a quotation is missing. If it is necessary to use one, treat the ellipses as you would a single word: three periods together with a space on either side. If the ellipsis follows a grammatically complete sentence, place a period after the last word preceding the ellipsis, and insert a space between this period and the ellipsis. Example: Ellipses can be tricky. ... Use with care

entitled/titled

As per the AP, reserve entitled to mean a right to do or have something. Do not use it to mean titled.

em dash

Use the full em dash rather than two dashes together. Em dashes will have no spaces on either side. Watch how lines are broken when em dashes are involved; the break needs to be after the em dash.

email

Unhyphenated, in keeping with the AP. In publications be sure to keep the entire email address together rather than letting it break at the end of a line of text.

esports

No hyphen, no capitalization unless it's beginning a sentence.

first annual

Do not use. Use "The First" or "Inaugural." An event must be held two consecutive years before it can be labeled annual.

heart/the Heart

Capitalize heart when referring to the Heart, the grassy area in front of Earlham Hall here on campus.

honorary doctorate

A person with an honorary doctorate is not addressed as Dr.

hyphenating adverbs

No hyphen is needed to link a two-word phrase that includes the adverb *very* and all adverbs ending in *-ly*: *a very good time, an easily remembered rule.*"

junior, senior

From AP: Abbreviate as *Jr.* and *Sr.* only with full names of persons or animals. Do not precede by a comma: *Joseph P. Kennedy Jr.* If it is necessary to distinguish between father and son in second reference, use the *elder Smith* or the *younger Smith*.

letters/complimentary close/salutation

Capitalize only the first letter of a complimentary close: Sincerely yours,

Capitalize the first and all major words in the salutation of a letter: Dear Best and Brightest Generation,

lists and bulleted items

Do not use a colon after a verb or a preposition introducing a list (including Ben, Julie, and Pete instead of including: Ben, Julie and Pete) unless the introductory phrase contains some variation of "the following" or "as follows."

Capitalize the first word following the dash or bullet. Use periods, not semicolons, at the end of each section, whether it is a full sentence or a phrase.

Use parallel construction for each item in a list:

- Start with the same part of speech for each item (in this example, a verb).
- Use the same voice (active or passive) for each item.
- Use the same verb tense for each item.
- Use the same sentence type (statement, question, exclamation) for each item.
- Use just a phrase for each item, if desired.

Avoid numbering unless there will be a reference to the numbers in later text.

If you must number a list in running text, place numbers (without periods) in parentheses. In vertical lists, use a period after each item if one or more is a complete sentence. In that case, the first words should be capitalized. Otherwise, capitalization of the first words depends on the context.

Alphabetize or put listed items in some other logical order. We eschew hierarchy in general as a Quaker institution, but it can be helpful when sharing lists. For example, on official listings for the College, the provost should generally be listed immediately following the president.

majors, minors

Do not capitalize majors or minors (exception, proper nouns: “I was an English major”).

months

According to AP: Capitalize the names of months in all uses. When a month is used with a specific date, abbreviate only Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec. Spell out when using alone or with a year alone. When a phrase lists only a month and a year, do not separate the year with commas. When a phrase refers to a month, day and year, set off the year with commas.

Examples: *January 1972 was a cold month. Jan. 2 was the coldest day of the month. His birthday is May 8. Feb. 15, 1987, was the target date.*

numbers

One through nine spelled out; 10 and above in numerals, except that numbers of the same category should be treated alike within the same context. (First through ninth spelled out; thereafter, 10th, 11th, etc.)

Use numerals with percent (7 percent), dollar sign (\$3), temperature (8 degrees), scores (7-3), page (page 2), room (room 9), and chapter (chapter 6).

Numbers beginning a sentence are always spelled out.

For figures greater than 999,999, use million or billion (2.3 million, 4 billion).

Use a comma in a figure greater than 1,000, unless it is a date, SAT score or temperature.

For inclusive numbers, the second number should be represented by only its final two digits if its beginning digit(s) are the same as the first number's (pages 343-47).

For fractions, write out and hyphenate (two-thirds, three-fifths) in running text. A fraction and a whole number appear as numerals with no space between them (3¼).

offices

Capitalize administrative office names.

online

One word.

phone numbers

Use no parentheses around area codes. Hyphens or periods may be used between sets of numbers, but be sure to remain consistent in an entire document.

Principles and Practices

Capitalize this phrase regarding Earlham’s values. For example:

Our approach is rooted in our Principles and Practices, which means we strive to create community, embrace simplicity, act with integrity, seek peace and treat one another with respect.

An ampersand may be used instead of *and*, but be sure to be consistent within a document.

seasons

Lowercase all seasons.

spring break, spring, spring semester

state abbreviations

Spell out the names of the 50 states when they stand alone. Punctuation: The names of the 50 U.S. states should be spelled out when used in the body of a story, whether standing alone or in conjunction with a city, town or village.

telephone numbers

As with the AP, no parentheses around area codes, hyphen between numbers. Use area codes unless, for example, creating a campus directory in which all numbers have the same area code.

765-983-1334

time

Times of day are typically indicated by the hour, without “:00,” and by a lowercase a.m. or p.m. In running text, times ranges should appear with “to” rather than with a dash.

Examples:

8 a.m. (not 8:00 a.m.)

8:15 a.m.

10 a.m.-5 p.m.; 9-11 p.m. (no need to repeat a.m./p.m. if the same; separate with en dash in publications like the *Earlhamite* or in programs)

The dance will take place from 5 to 7 p.m. (not from 5-7 p.m.)

Put times before dates in a narrative format.

at 6 p.m. Friday, January 12

When referring to 12 o'clock noon, use the word noon if possible instead of 12. Likewise for 12 o'clock at night. Refer to it as midnight. The dance will last from 10 p.m. to midnight.

smart quotes, curvy quotes, straight quotes

Smart (curved) quotation marks and smart apostrophes are typographically correct. Straight quotes are used to designate inches, straight apostrophes to designate feet. Be sure to get the direction of the curvy quote (apostrophe) correct when used for a graduation year, for example: use the ending single quote mark, not the one that indicates opening the quote: *Ellen Grossmutter '12 was the first, and hopefully last, member of Dance Alloy to twist her ankle during a performance.*

titles

Refer to AP for complete detail. In general, lowercase and spell out titles when they are not used with an individual's name: *The president gave a speech. The pope gave his blessing.*

For formal titles, capitalize when they are used immediately before one or more names: *Pope Paul, President Obama, Vice Presidents June Jones and William Smith*. A formal title generally is one that denotes a scope of authority, professional activity or academic activity.

theatre/theater

While both are correct, use theatre unless writing the name of a place that spells its name with the *er* ending.

toward/towards

Use toward.