

# Editorial Style Guide for Yale University Publications

**CHOOSING A STYLE** [AP Style for Journalists / MLA Handbooks for Researchers / *Chicago Manual of Style* for Publishers] \* **RECOMMENDED STYLE** [Consistency / Spelling / Titles: Italic or Roman / Some Punctuation Rules, with Examples / Compound vs. Single Words / Numerals] \* **YALE-SPECIFIC EDITORIAL MATTERS** [Capitalization in References to Yale and Its Organizational Units / Lowercase for Abbreviated References / Capitalization in Yale Academic and Administrative Titles / Other Academic Terms Often Capitalized / Degrees / Yale Organizational Units with Ampersand] \* **COPYRIGHT — QUOTATIONS — CREDIT** [Text / Images] \* **CONTACT INFORMATION**

# Choosing a style

*Editors are regularly asked whether a particular word or usage is right or wrong, and often the correct answer is “It depends.” Many editorial matters—such as capitalization, punctuation, and occasionally even grammar and spelling—are less a matter of fixed rules than of conventions. An organization that publishes any text should decide which of several correct styles to adopt.*

*A style is a set of conventions that ensures consistent and appropriate usage for a publication or a series of publications. The chosen style provides choices between possible alternatives: for example, choices between alternate spellings, when to abbreviate and how, the appropriate degree of formality, and conventions on punctuation. Adhering to a style will help a writer to avoid the inconsistency or inappropriateness that can mar a publication.*

*In its voluminous publishing ventures, Yale University has not adopted one style that governs all.*

## **AP Style for Journalists**

The Yale Office of Public Affairs & Communications and the press relations staffs in other Yale organizations follow the Associated Press style. Commonly preferred by journalists, AP style is a streamlined, fairly informal convention that uses less capitalization and fewer commas than some other standard styles. The *Associated Press Stylebook* can be ordered online at [www.apstylebook.com](http://www.apstylebook.com).

Here’s an example of the AP approach:

The Reverend Ian B. Oliver will be installed as pastor of the University Church on Sunday, Nov. 16. [NOTE lowercase “pastor” and abbreviation of “November.”]...Oliver assumed his duties as senior associate chaplain for Protestant life at Yale... [NOTE use of last name, rather than name plus title; also, lowercase for “associate chaplain.”]...The University Church engages students, faculty, staff and community... [NOTE absence of comma before “and community” – a departure from MLA and Chicago style.]

## **MLA Handbooks for Researchers**

Scholarly publishing at Yale calls for other criteria, in particular adherence to widely recognized standards for citing other authors and their publications. The Modern Language Association (MLA) publishes two versions of its style guide. The more advanced manual, *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*, is recommended for graduate students, scholars, and professional writers. The basic manual, *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, is designed for high school and college students. Both MLA guides provide helpful information on rules of copyright and fair use of previously published material as well as other research guidelines and style considerations. See the MLA Web site for more information and details on purchasing: [www.mla.org/style\\_faq1](http://www.mla.org/style_faq1).

## **Chicago Manual of Style for Publishers**

The most detailed style guide (with extensive help and examples concerning punctuation, capitalization, and grammar) and the one regularly followed by book publishers is *The Chicago Manual of Style*, published by the University of Chicago. The online edition is available to Yale users at [www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html).

# Recommended Style

*In the absence of one clearly defined “Yale style,” the Office of the Yale University Printer recommends a style that is based on the Chicago Manual and supplemented with a number of usages that apply specifically to Yale. This style is often referred to as “Bulletin style,” as it is followed in the seventeen catalogs that make up the annual Bulletin of Yale University series. The basic elements of Bulletin style are summarized below.*

## Consistency

The hallmark of any style is consistency, which allows publications to avoid conflicting usage that, while not absolutely incorrect, can make a poor impression—especially for publications originating at an institution of higher learning. For instance, a writer has a choice between alternate spellings (adviser/advisor), alternate forms (online/on-line, Web site/website, toward/towards), number style (fifteen/15), and full spelling or abbreviations (5 percent/5%).

The writer or editor needs to take a deliberate and well-informed approach to such options. Two rules to follow are: (1) choose one form, do not use both indiscriminately (to avoid the impression of carelessness or casualness), and (2) choose the “better” of the options. How to decide which is better? This is where the present guide can be helpful.

## Spelling

Use of the dictionary is the beginning—not the end—of this matter, because that resource offers both “adviser” and “advisor,” “toward” and “towards,” among other alternatives. The convention followed by most serious style manuals (including MLA and Chicago) is to use the preferred spelling in *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged*, available online to Yale users at [http://collections.chadwyck.com/home/home\\_mwd.jsp](http://collections.chadwyck.com/home/home_mwd.jsp). The convenient desk model is the *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*.

The preferred form of a word is the first one listed in Webster’s. Following this rule, Bulletin style selects “adviser” as the preferred spelling, rather than the one listed second (advisor). Similarly, preference goes to “toward” over “towards” (the latter defined as “var. [a variant] of *toward*”).

## Titles: Italic or Roman

Italic type is used for titles of books, plays, long poems that have been published separately, films, works of art, musical compositions, and art exhibitions:

*Moby-Dick; The Collapse and Fall of the Roman Empire*  
*Hamlet; Romeo and Juliet*  
*Paradise Lost; Hart Crane’s The Bridge*  
*Citizen Kane*  
*The Last Supper; Guernica*  
*The Magic Flute; Carmen; Children’s Corner Suite*  
the exhibition *Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness: American Art from the Yale University Art Gallery*

Roman type and quotation marks are used for titles of stories, short poems, articles in a periodical, and chapter titles:

“Building a Fire,” Jack London’s short story  
Robert Frost’s “The Road Not Taken”  
The column “The Uncertain Art” appears regularly in *The American Scholar*.  
“New Forms of Worship,” an article in *Journal of Religion*

The titles of courses and generic musical works take neither italics nor quotation marks:

He regularly teaches the course Environmental History of Africa.

Beethoven's Symphony No. 5

the Adagio from Mahler's Fifth Symphony

Note: Italics are also used for less common foreign language terms (*fin-de-siècle* is italicized; ad hoc, in vitro, in situ are not).

### Some Punctuation Rules, with Examples

#### COMMA

*In a series.* Unless an organization is following AP style, we recommend the Chicago rule on commas in a series (the “serial comma”):

in the first, second, and third years

before, during, or after the meeting

*In compound sentences.* A comma is used before “and” when it separates two independent clauses (in the structure called a compound sentence):

Yale had grown considerably by 1900, and the Law School had become known in its own right.

*In complex sentences.* Use a comma after an introductory clause in sentences that start with “If,” “When,” “Although,” “Whereas,” and other subordinating conjunctions:

When Yale College was founded, New Haven was a colony with a population of several thousand.

If a student applies for financial aid, he or she is required to complete the FAFSA form.

*After introductory phrases.* The role of commas is to separate units to reflect the meaning and to ensure clarity for a reader. To avoid ambiguity or to allow a break when an introductory phrase is long (or combines two phrases), a comma should be used in the following examples:

In film studies, readings include scripts as well as criticism...

In the morning of the first day of his reign, he announced...

Many writers, however, overuse the comma after brief introductory phrases where it serves no purpose (“At Yale, he majored in...”; “In 1942, he volunteered for military service.”). In these cases, preferred style dispenses with the comma (At Yale he majored in...; In 1942 he volunteered...).

*To set off parenthetical information.* Careful writers usually distinguish between restrictive and nonrestrictive clauses, where “restrictive” means that the clause is essential to the meaning, while “nonrestrictive” clauses are parenthetical, supplying additional but not defining information. One way to decide if such clauses are restrictive is to try omitting them from the sentence; does the sentence still have meaning and serve the intended purpose? A few examples:

A student who applies after the deadline will not be considered. (The clause “who applies after the deadline” is essential to the meaning of the sentence and therefore restrictive – no comma.)

The student, who applied after the deadline, was not really interested in attending the conference. (The “who” clause provides additional, not essential, information, and so commas are required.)

The course that we taught last year is no longer offered. (Here, two conventions apply: no comma is used, and “that” is preferred to “which.” Also possible: “The course we taught last year is . . .”: this usage is a little more colloquial and could sometimes be confusing.)

The course, which we also taught last year, is open to undergraduates by special permission. (Parenthetical, nonrestrictive clause – so commas are required, as is “which” instead of “that.”)

#### SEMICOLON

The semicolon has two basic uses. First, it separates two independent clauses (clauses that could be independent sentences in their own right), taking the place of a conjunction such as “and” or “but”:

Times were changing; Yale College had begun to admit women. (Has the same meaning as “Times were changing, and Yale College had begun to admit women.”)

The other use of the semicolon is as something of a “super-comma” in series that also include series:

Subjects discussed in the course include the nature, origin, and development of gender studies; important female novelists, essayists, and critics of the postwar period; and the role of new critical approaches. (Without semicolons, the series would be difficult to understand.)

#### COLON

The colon introduces an enumeration that expands on a statement, as in this example:

He cited three reasons for canceling the project: cost, safety, and personnel shortages.

#### HYPHEN

The hyphen has two basic uses:

1. To link words that form a single phrase and might otherwise be misread:

cost-effective measures  
single-payer plan  
twentieth-century literature  
a two-term course  
joint-degree programs  
steady- and unsteady-state behavior  
spring-term registration  
self-service facility  
well-wrought urn

These phrases often occur in an adjectival usage, preceding a noun, as in the examples cited. In other constructions, the same two words are not necessarily joined by a hyphen:

a single payer will be found  
literature in the twentieth century  
*but*, measures that are cost-effective

Where the likelihood of confusion is less, no hyphen is used:

foreign language requirement  
financial aid policies

Do not hyphenate adverbs formed by the addition of “-ly”:

financially independent spouse

2. To link certain prefixes and suffixes to words:

pseudo-scientific  
quasi-religious  
non-course requirements

Note that Webster’s lists specific words, such as noncombatant, nonprofit, counterinsurgency, that many writers use with hyphens. The rule is to avoid hyphens with prefixes that are not themselves words, with certain exceptions for rare or new combinations like “non-course” or “non-word.”

#### DASH

There are two types of dash:

En dash (–), which is longer than a hyphen and shorter than the em dash, is used for numerical ranges.

Mark Twain (1835–1910)

See pages 99–102

Note that it is incorrect to use the en dash after beginning a range with the word “from” (“...who ruled from 1766–1792” is *incorrect*; this has to be “from 1766 to 1792” or “who ruled 1766–1792”).

Some writers use the en dash to replace the hyphen when linking units larger than a single word. This use of the en dash is optional. It is sometimes considered unnecessarily complex:

pre–Civil War (pre-Civil War, using hyphen, could suggest that the link is only between “pre” and “Civil”)

Em dash (—), longer than the en dash, is used for major breaks:

1. To introduce a contradiction or other shift in thought (where a comma or semicolon would be less emphatic):

He was persuaded to leave—forced out, in fact.

She will try to interrupt—don’t let her.

2. To set off a parenthetical statement or list:

The course reviews major writers of the period—Frost, Faulkner, and Hemingway—in historical and cultural context.

This form of address should be used—if at all—under carefully prescribed conditions.

#### Compound vs. Single Words

The dictionary is the arbiter for related options such as “nonprofit” vs. “non-profit.” Preferred usage is the former. As a rule, prefixes and suffixes (unless they are full words) are combined with the main word without hyphenation:

noninterventionist, postwar, prewar

Most “non-” words can be looked up in Webster’s, which lists many of them (both the hyphenated and nonhyphenated examples). As a rule, if a word is not listed, it should be hyphenated. (A note of warning: many authors still prefer to keep the hyphen after “non” and will override editors’ attempts to follow Webster’s. Such departures from the rulebook are acceptable if they are consistently applied.)

*Common words:* course work, fieldwork, e-mail, online, policy making, policyholder, decision maker, yearlong

### **Numerals**

Numerals rather than words are used for quantities of 100 or more:

thirty-two credits  
one and one-half hours  
146 performances  
enrollment limited to 100

Numerals are used with “percent”:

10 percent (not usually abbreviated with %)

Do not, however, use numerals (even year dates) to start a sentence:

Ten percent of students surveyed said... (*not* “10 percent...”)  
The year 2004 saw an increase (*not* “2004 saw an increase...”)

Other numeric usage:

the 2011–2012 academic year (four digits in each case)  
from 1990 to 1996, or, in the period 1990–96 (*not* “from 1990–96”)  
a 500-level course  
the 1940s, the 1950s

# Yale-Specific Editorial Matters

## Capitalization in References to Yale and Its Organizational Units

Yale University is often referred to here as “the University,” and Bulletin style recommends the convention of the uppercase “U” in “the University” to show that it refers to Yale. Schools and departments often adopt the same convention, but there are distinctions in capitalization between a formal and an informal style:

the School of Medicine (formal title), *but* the medical school (informal)  
the Department of Economics, *but* the Economics department

In publications issued by one of the Yale schools, the following types of references frequently occur and are acceptable:

the School of Drama, the School

the Office of the Secretary, the Secretary’s Office

The School awards the degrees of... (when the identity of the particular school is clear from the context, such as the course catalog for that school)

## Lowercase for Abbreviated References

There is a common tendency to maintain capital letters unnecessarily in abbreviated references (which substitute for the full title). With the exception of the examples cited above, Bulletin style recommends lowercase for references such as the following:

The Yale Forest Forum was founded in 1982. The forum [*not* Forum] has as its mission...

The Graduate Certificate of Concentration in International and Area Studies provides recognition for completion of... The certificate may be pursued...

The Class of 2000 held its tenth reunion in May. Members of the class...

The Council on Latin American Studies... The council coordinates...

The World Fellows Program... Yale World Fellows... *but*: each fellow... the fellows are... He was a fellow of the American Academy of...

## Capitalization in Yale Academic and Administrative Titles

Bulletin style calls for capitalization when the title is part of the name (Professor John Smith, President Richard C. Levin, Provost Peter Salovey), or when the title follows the name in a list (Richard C. Levin, President of Yale University). In other usages, the nouns standing alone are not capitalized (the president announced...; he became provost in 2003...; Students require the approval of the associate dean for academic affairs...)

In faculty titles, a distinction is made between the following two usages:

Janet Jones, professor of history, announced...

Janet Jones, the William Smith Professor of History, announced...

## Other Academic Terms Often Capitalized

A grade of Incomplete

The course is taken Pass/Fail

## Degrees

The names of specific degrees are capitalized in formal references:

the degree of Master of Arts in Religion  
Master of Forest Science  
Bachelor of Arts  
Doctor of Philosophy

In general or informal usage, the names of degrees are not capitalized:

The F&ES master's degree program...

He completed a master's degree in international relations...

He received an M.A. in political science...

Yale awards master's and doctoral degrees in Political Science (here, Political Science is capitalized because it is the department that is being referenced)...

### Citation of Yale Degrees

Yale degrees are often cited, in a variety of formats. The clearest method is the following (note the use of periods in the degree abbreviations):

Nathan Hale, B.A. 1773

Mary Smith, B.A. 1999, M.F.A. 2001, announced...

John Skinner, M.D. 2001

*Briefer citations:* When degree references are very frequent in a particular context, there may be a preference for briefer formats. For instance, in a practice sometimes favored by the Development Office for lists of alumni:

Phyllis Brown '03, J.D. '06

Maya Lin '89, M.Arch. '93

In this format, a date without a degree abbreviation is understood to refer to a Yale undergraduate degree. Note the importance of using a true apostrophe (') in this format.

Some schools assume that a two- or four-digit date without any degree designation (e.g., James Jones '95) in one of that school's own publications refers to that school's most common degree. Thus, in a Law School publication, the '95 is understood as referring to a J.D. This practice could be problematic in schools – for example, Divinity and Forestry & Environmental Studies – that award a number of degrees, so it is not generally recommended. If the publication in question also lists degrees other than those awarded by the school itself, it is clearer to include all degree abbreviations.

*Attendance at Yale, but no degree:* In cases of people who left Yale without a degree, the information can be conveyed this way:

Dick Cheney, Yale College 1966–68 (the attendance dates)

Paul Newman, Drama 1957–58

## Yale Organizational Units with Ampersand

Official names of the various Yale schools are established by the Yale Corporation, including details such as use of the ampersand (&). The following titles are official and should be used in all instances (including use of "&" or "and"):

School of Forestry & Environmental Studies

School of Engineering & Applied Science

Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

Institution for Social and Policy Studies

Program in Ethics, Politics, and Economics

# Copyright–Quotations–Credit

*One aspect of publishing that cannot be overemphasized is the approach to use of material by other writers or artists.*

## **Text**

No one preparing a publication, or even a document for internal distribution, should ever use another writer's work (that is, copy or duplicate it in a text) without observing three requirements:

1. Indicate that it is being quoted from another source – by use of quotation marks or other conventions (sometimes the typography is sufficient to set off an excerpt as a quotation: e.g., by using smaller type than the regular text in the document, or by indenting a quoted passage or setting it off with spaces above or below), showing exactly where the quoted material starts, is interrupted (if relevant), and ends.
2. Accurately quote the original text, and cite the author and standard publication data (title, publisher, city of publication, date of the edition used, and page numbers). Refer to the *Chicago Manual of Style* for citation format.
3. Obtain permission if necessary. This is the most complex part of the transaction, since rules governing “fair use” in U.S. copyright law leave a certain amount of leeway. A review, for instance, can quote extensively from the work that is being reviewed (if rules 1 and 2 above are followed). Part 4 of the *Chicago Manual of Style* discusses the question of fair use – general rules about how much text can be quoted, and when permission is required from the original copyright holder. The *Chicago Manual* concludes: “As a general rule, one should never quote more than a few contiguous paragraphs of prose or lines of poetry at a time or let the quotations, even if scattered, begin to overshadow the quoter's own material” (see section 4.79; [www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/16/cho4/cho4\\_seco79.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/16/cho4/cho4_seco79.html)). It is the responsibility of the publisher or author of the new text to obtain permission to quote significant portions of material (applying the general considerations in *Chicago Manual* 4.79 and related sections). In some cases the copyright holder of the original material requires a fee for use of the quoted material.

Similar rules, with some differences, apply to the use of information that is being paraphrased or used for background. It is imperative to properly attribute any discussion or argument that is based on ideas from another author.

## **Images**

The use of photographs or other visual material (including drawings, design elements, logos, clip art) in a print or Web publication also requires permission from the copyright holder. It is up to the user to obtain permission in advance of publication and to pay fees for the use of copyrighted material.

# Contact Information

The Office of the Yale University Printer is available to assist any Yale office seeking information or help with graphic design as well as editorial matters. We are glad to schedule consultations. You can also direct specific questions to:

Lesley Baier, Senior Editor  
Office of the Yale University Printer  
2 Whitney Avenue, Rm 203  
203.432.9217  
[lesley.baier@yale.edu](mailto:lesley.baier@yale.edu)

Updated August 2011  
Office of the Yale University Printer