



St. Mary's College of Maryland
at Historic St. Mary's City

Office of Publications

January, 2009

Dear Colleagues,

This style guide will help you as you write – and edit – the written material that goes out from your particular administrative office. It will also ensure professional consistency across the campus.

Its twin is Lee Capristo's "Style Guide for College Logo and Seahawk Mascot" (2007).

This guide on office writing provides two sections that will help you:

Section One (this side of this guide) deals with language and writing. In one sense, this should be easier than expected. That's because we use an easy, "talking" voice with our outside readers and at the same time resist any attempt to sound important or authoritarian -- which only results in dead, bureaucratic writing. We want our readers to feel helped and enlightened by what we send them. The College follows what is called "Plain English," the grammatically correct but everyday language used by *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Section Two (the flip side of this guide) is an introduction to information about the College. Older employees have picked up this information over a period of time, but newer employees may find it inaccessible and even bewildering. St. Mary's, like all colleges and universities, has its own culture, and it is our hope, as the Office of Publications, that we can explain it to you at the outset and help you to feel not only comfortable but also knowledgeable about the things you have to write about.

Please call the Publications Office whenever you have a question about either the College culture or the kind of language we use in all our writing. Our number is 240-895-4795.

Sincerely,

Janet Haugaard, Editor Emerita
Office of Publications

FAQs

1. Q: How do I get **mailing authorization** for (a) posting to the Web, and (b) mailing out 100 or more hard copies?
A: Go to N:\Publications Office\Publications Forms\Mailing Approval Tracking OR on the Web at www.smcm.edu/publications/Mailing Approval Tracking. Fill out the form on the computer, except for editor's line. Fax to Lee Capristo (4999) in Publications Office. She will sign and fax it back to you. Her phone is 4795.
2. Q: Did she major in Anthropology or **anthropology**?
A: She majored in **anthropology** with a minor in Spanish. **(See Capitalization, G)**
3. Q: Is it Christmas vacation or Winter Break?
A: Winter Break. Also, Spring Break. **(See Capitalization, D-Events)**
4. Q: Are these the right spellings?
A: Yes. (1) AmeriCorps (2) Daugherty-Palmer (3) first-year student (4) Gallaudet (5) Johns Hopkins (6) New-Student Orientation (all caps for an event) (7) Parris Glendening (8) Sotterley (9) T-shirt. **(See Words)**
5. Q: Our master's degree at St. Mary's: Is it MAT or M.A.T.?
A: M.A.T. Also, B.A., M.A., Ph.D. **(See Academic Degrees)**
6. Q: Do we write **President** or **president**? Is it **Dean** or **dean**?
A: If it's a title and comes *before the name*, it's President. We met President Wilson. But if it's a job description *after the name*, it's president. Woodrow Wilson was president during World War I. The same rule applies everywhere. **(See Capitalization, "People.")**
7. Q: Why do some of my apostrophes print out backwards? (‘)
A: Because the computer won't allow an apostrophe in front of a word or number. To trick the computer successfully, go to **Punctuation, D-1** or **Numbers, 6-b**.
8. Q: When it comes to people, do we write **black** or **Black**?
A: It's black (A black supervisor). However, it's Black for organizations and titles of publications. The same principle applies for **white/White**. **(See Race)**
9. Q: Our very long name: how do we handle it?
A: First mention: "St. Mary's College of Maryland." After that: simply "St. Mary's" or "the College." For athletic wear and legal documents, use "SMCM." **(See Name of the College.)**
10. Q: What are the rules for titles of publications?
A: Use italics for books, magazines, newspapers, plays, boats.
Use quotes for small items like articles, poems, songs, CDs, paintings, movies, operas, ballets, TV and radio programs.
Do nothing for symphonies. **(See Words, "Titles")**

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PLAIN ENGLISH

Sometimes called “Reader-friendly English,” Plain English is the focused, fast-moving writing of *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Type “Plain English” into your search engine and see what comes up. In general, these are the characteristics of good, clear writing from administrative offices:

1. As you write, “talk” to your reader. Imagine you are on the phone and you know that the person on the other end of the line is short on time – and patience.
2. Generally, try to keep your sentences no longer than 27 words (2½ typewritten lines). Psycholinguists tell us that more words than that can weaken quick comprehension.
3. Avoid “show-off” vocabulary. Choose shorter, better-known words. Be judicious when choosing lesser-known words.

English was originally an Anglo-Saxon language, characterized by short, punchy words (*house, belly, fire*). Later, when England was conquered by the French in 1066, new French synonyms (*residence, stomach, flames*) mingled with the older Anglo-Saxon vocabulary. Later still, during the Renaissance, a group of university scholars attempted to substitute Latin synonyms (*habitation, abdomen, conflagration*) for the Anglo-Saxon and French. Think of English as a many-stringed instrument, capable of being both direct and subtle. A good dictionary will help you as you write.

4. In general, avoid euphemisms.
No: *passed away, an enslaved person, inebriated, inner city, correctional facility*.
Yes: *died, slave, drunk, slum, jail or prison*.
5. Avoid the Latin abbreviations that are appropriate for scholars but baffling to the general reader.
No: Choose a good diet – *i.e.*, one low in sugar.
Yes: Choose a good diet – *that is*, one low in sugar.
No: Focus on vegetables and fruit – *e.g.*, spinach, beets, apples.
Yes: Focus on vegetables and fruit – *for example*, spinach, beets, apples.
6. Provide “white space” (that is, enough visual breathing space to keep your reader from feeling overwhelmed). Keep paragraphs short, especially the first and last. Trick: hold your text up to a mirror so that you cannot be distracted by text and meaning. Do any paragraphs look long and dense? Break them in two.

7. Don't hide behind the passive voice. Use the active voice instead.

No: Mistakes were made in implementing the plan.

Yes: The director said he had probably made mistakes in implementing the plan.

No: Your gift to the College is appreciated.

Yes: The College appreciates your generosity.

8. Get rid of any fat coming out of your office and replace it with English that is lean.

FAT

(The language of
bureaucracy)

as regards
assist
at a later date
at this point in time

cognizant
commence
concerning
desire
draw the conclusion
due to the fact that

employ
expedite
indebtedness
inquire
in relation to
in spite of the fact that
in the field of

make an assumption
make a decision
prior to
provide a summary of
reside
transpire

until such time as
usage
utilize
with reference to

LEAN

(The language of *The N.Y. Times*,
The Washington Post, and *The
Chronicle of Higher Education*)

about
help
later
at this point (or, at this time)

aware
begin (or, start)
about
want, wish
conclude
because

use
speed up
debt
ask
about
although
in

assume
decide
before
summarize
live
happen (or, occur)

until
use
use
about

READER-FRIENDLY LANGUAGE

“Reader-friendly” English is straightforward, jargon-free, and easy to read. It is used by *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. The standards and advice of these papers are followed by the Publications Office of St. Mary’s College of Maryland.

The New York Times
Manual of
Style and Usage



THE CHRONICLE
of Higher Education



The Washington Post
Desk-Book
On
Style



WORDS (COMMON IN CAMPUS WRITING)

The N.Y. Times, The Washington Post, The Chronicle of Higher Education, recent grammar guides, and the St. Mary's Publications Office all favor the following:

a cappella (two *p*'s, two *l*'s)

a.m. and p.m. (lowercase, and periods required)

adviser (not *advisor*)

advising (not *advisement*)

affect = verb: *to influence* (*How will his decision affect us?*)

affect = noun: *emotion* (*During therapy, he displayed some negative affects.*)

African American = noun (*Six African Americans attended the conference.*)

= adj. **after** the noun (*The winners were young and African American.*)

African-American = adj. **before** the noun (*She is an African-American student.*)

aid = *help, assistance*

aide = *an assistant*

AIDS = acronym for Auto Immune Deficiency Syndrome

a lot (not *alot*)

all-American

all right (not *alright*)

alum, alums (An easy alternative to the Latin *alumna, alumnus, alumnae, alumni*)

AmeriCorps (one word, two caps) Pronunciation: *Ameri-kor*

America Reads (two words, two caps)

ampersand = & (use only when already part of a corporate name; in general, do not use as a shortcut for the word *and*)

author = a noun (*He is the author of that bestseller.*)

author = not a verb (Do not use *He authored the book.* Use *wrote*)

barbecue

biannual = *twice a year; semiannual*

biennial = *every two years; every other year*

bimonthly = *every other month* (do not confuse with *semimonthly*)

biweekly = *every other week* (do not confuse with *semiweekly*)

black (lowercase when referring to racial group, but capitalize for a group name (*Many of the black students belong to the Black Student Union.*) See also white.

Bon Appétit (two caps and one acute accent)

book titles (italicize)

bylaws (one word, no hyphen)

capital = the governing **city** of federal or state government

capitol = the actual **building** where a federal or state legislature meets

Christmas vacation (on official College material, use *Winter Break* instead).

Class (capitalize when referring to a specific year: *the Class of 2001*)

College (use capital C for St. Mary's (*The College is hosting a large conference.*))

comm. = the abbreviation for *commission*

cmte. = the abbreviation for *committee*

complement = *to make something full, complete* (*His skills complement yours.*)

compliment = *to praise, flatter* (*He complimented us on our project.*)

= *gift* (*We just gave them six complimentary tickets.*)

continual = *constant, with interruptions* (*her continual nagging*)

continuous = *constant, no interruptions* (*continuous snow for two days*)

credit-hour (with hyphen). A credit-hour is the same as a *semester-hour*.

criterion = one measurement (*the criterion of reliability*)

criteria = two or more measurements (*the double criteria of reliability and innovation*)

criteria = this word does not exist; use criteria instead.

cum laude = Latin, *with praise*. Example: He graduated *cum laude*. See also *magna cum laude* and *summa cum laude*. Pronounce *laude* as two syllables.

c.v. = *curriculum vitae* (also, informally, his vita, but without the final *e*)

Daugherty-Palmer (hyphenated, because it's two separate families, related by marriage).

daylong (one word, no hyphen)

died (avoid *passed away* and other euphemisms such as *unmentionables*, *little girls' room*, etc.)

dir. = the abbreviation for *director*

dr. = the abbreviation for *doctor*

disinterested = *impartial, neutral, open-minded*

uninterested = *not interested, bored*

Dove (Use italics for boats, ships) The *Dove* was the 1634 vessel; the *Maryland Dove* is the modern replica at Historic St. Mary's City.

e.g. = Latin: *exempli gratia*. In office writing, prefer the English *for example*.

E-mail (At sentence opening: *E-mail has transformed the way we communicate.*)

e-mail (Mid-sentence: *Please confirm by e-mail.*)

Easter vacation (on official College material, use *Spring Break* instead).

Eastern Shore

effect = verb: *to bring about* (They want *to effect a* change in the law.)

effect = noun: *result* (The new law has already had *a good effect* on the community.)

emeritus = masculine (*He is professor emeritus.*)

emerita = feminine (*She is now a trustee emerita.*)

emeritae = two or more females (*Both women were appointed trustees emeritae.*)

emeriti = two or more males; also, mixed male and female (*professors emeriti*)

ensure = *to make certain* (*Please ensure that he gets home after the party.*)

insure = *to guarantee with money* (*Please insure the package for \$200.*)

assure = *to promise* (*I assure you there are no termites in that house.*)

entitled = *justified, allowed* (*He is entitled to six more days of leave.*)

(Do not use for titles of publications. See *titled* instead)

et al. = *et alii* (Latin: *and the other people*). The *al.* rhymes with *gal* and *shall*.

etc. = *et cetera* (Latin, *and so on and so forth*). Pronounced *ett setera*, with no *k* sound.

every other (two words, no hyphen)

exhibit = a display of objects

exhibition = a public display, often of art. Our Art Department prefers this word

expedite = *to speed up* (*He wants us to expedite the Jones project*)

expedient = *advantageous, characterized by self-interest* (*He found it expedient to leave the state rather than pay child-support.*)

expeditious = *speedy, prompt* (*They produced the report expeditiously.*)

faculty = singular, when thought of as a faceless unit. (*The faculty meets at specified times. It follows its own set of bylaws.*)

faculty = plural, when thought of more humanly as a group of individuals. (*The faculty meet at specified times. They follow their own set of bylaws.*)

famous (do not confuse with *infamous*, which means *evil*). See *infamous*.

federal = not capitalized, unless part of an already existing title. However, *the Feds*, *the Fed*.

first-come, first-served

first, second, third

firstly, secondly, thirdly

first-year student, first-year course, etc. (Compound adjective before the noun requires a hyphen)

For Goodness' Sake (apostrophe required)

France-Merrick (hyphenated, because it's two families)

freshman = singular noun (*She will be a freshman at Cornell next year.*)

freshmen = plural noun (*Most of the Cornell freshmen turned out for the game.*)

freshman = adjective (*They were both freshman senators in Congress last year.*)

Gallaudet

Glendening, Parris

Goodpaster

grade-point average (GPA)

graduated = (*He graduated from St. Mary's last year.*)

(Not *He graduated St. Mary's* or *He was graduated from*)

H = the “**h**” is silent (not pronounced) in the following words and must therefore be treated like a vowel and preceded by “an”:

an honorary degree, an honorarium, an herb.

= the “**h**” is pronounced in the following words and must therefore be treated like

a consonant and preceded by “a”: *a house,*

a hat, a history book, a historic occasion.

high tea = a hot and hearty supper, an end-of-day meal served at ordinary family dinner table.

afternoon tea = silver, good china, linen napkins, scones, pretty finger-food, served mid-afternoon, originally from a low tea table. (Interesting explanation at www.seedsofknowledge.com/lowtea.html)

historic = *of top importance* (*It was a historic moment when he quit smoking.*)

historical = *related to the study of history* (*She enjoys historical research.*)

Historic St. Mary's City = HSMC

honorarium (the Latin plural is *honoraria*; the English plural is *honorariums*)

honors college (no apostrophe, ever. Not capitalized, except in a heading)

honor society (not *honors* or *honorary*). (*Phi Beta Kappa is an honor society.*)

honoris causa = Latin, *for the sake of honor*. An honorary degree is unearned, *honoris causa*, given only as an expression of gratitude. The *h* is silent. Pronunciation: on-OR-is. See Section Two, Honorary Degrees, p. 19.

hors d'oeuvre (one item – the *h* and *s* are not pronounced)

hors d'oeuvres (items for nibbling before a meal) – neither the *h* nor the *s* is pronounced)

i.e. = Latin, *id est*. Prefer the English *that is*, or *that is to say*

iced tea (not *ice tea*)

ID (also I.D.) = identification. Always capitalized.

id = Freud's term for the unconscious, instinctual drives in the human psyche. Not capitalized.

in memoriam

infamous = a negative kind of fame (*Pearl Harbor: "a day that will live in infamy"*)

insure = *to guarantee with money* (*Please insure the package for \$200.*)

ensure = *to make certain* (*Please ensure that he gets home after the party.*)

assure = *to promise* (*I assure you there are no termites in that house.*)

inter = *bury* (*His interment takes place right after the funeral.*)

intern = *apprentice* (*Her internship is with our law firm.*)

= *confine* (*He spent three years in a Japanese internment camp.*)

Internet (capital *I*)

its = adjective: *The tree has lost its leaves.*

it's = verb: *contraction for it is* (*It's a great party.*)

it's = verb: *contraction for it has* (*It's been a good year.*)

Johns Hopkins (two 19th-century families: Margaret Johns married Gerard Hopkins)

Juilliard

lay = *to place, to set* (= Spanish *poner*; French *mettre*)

Don't lay the blame on me. The hen laid an egg. They have laid the foundation.

lie = to *recline* (= Spanish *acostarse*; French *se coucher*)

On Sundays he mostly lies around all day.

Last night both dogs lay on our bed.

I have lain in the sun for over an hour

led = the past tense of *lead*. (*He led his troops into battle.*)

lend = verb (*He lent me \$60. The federal government lends money to students.*)

loan = noun (*The loan was for \$60. The federal government provides student loans.*)

liaison

lifelong (no hyphen)

long (*daylong, weeklong, yearlong*)

long-term (hyphenated when used as adjective in front of a noun)

magna cum laude = Latin, with *great praise*. See also *cum laude* and *summa cum laude*.

Mailing authorization = See #1 on FAQ page, facing the table of contents.

majority = more than half of countable items. Do not use for non-count items.

No: - the majority of the time

No: - the majority of the forest

No: - the majority of her worry

No: - the majority of his affection

Yes: - most of the time

Yes: - most of the forest

Yes: - most of her worry

Yes: - most of his affection

MasterCard (one word but two caps)

memo, memos (Use these instead of the Latin *memorandum, memoranda*)

memoriam (as in, *in memoriam*)

Merchant Marine Academy at King's Point (not *Marines*)

mike = shortened form of *microphone*. (*It's open mike night.*)

MOU (or m.o.u.) = *memorandum of understanding*

namesake = a person who is named after another (usually older) person.

New-Student Orientation (capital letters for a College event)

newspaper titles (Use italics, not quotation marks or underlining)

notorious = *negatively famous* (He was a notoriously absent-minded driver.)

occur = *happen* (used only for unplanned events: The accident occurred at noon.)

take place = (for *planned* events: The banquet took place in DPC.)

One-Card

ongoing

online

Orientation (capitalize when referring to New-Student Orientation at St. Mary's)

p.m. and a.m. (lowercase, and periods required)

partake = *to take a share of food or drink*

take part = *to participate in a group activity*

participate = *to take part in a group activity*

passed away = a euphemism for *died*. Use *died*.

Patuxent River Naval Air Station = the base (lowercase)

peak = *top*; we could see the mountain peak.

pique = *a fit of anger or resentment*; a snit

percent (one word)

phenomenon = *one extraordinary thing*

phenomena = *two or more extraordinary things*

phenomenons = *this word does not exist*; use phenomena instead.

pore = *to concentrate* (He pored over his lab notes.)

pour = *to flow downward* (It poured cats and dogs last night.)

premier = *first in importance* (a premier engineering college)

premiere = opening night of a play, exhibition, etc.

prerequisite = *a prior requirement* (CHEM 312 is prerequisite for CHEM 325.)

perquisite = *a benefit* (The position has several perquisites or 'perks.')

Presidents' Day = plural, as it's for both Lincoln (Feb. 12) and Washington (Feb. 22).

Prince George residence hall

Prince George's County

principal = *chief, most important* (As school principal, his principal worry was the budget.)

principle = *rule, belief* (His principle is, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it.")

RA (caps, but lowercase for *resident assistant* and similar SMCM job descriptions)

residence = hyphenate the following but do not capitalize: *artist-in-residence*,
musician-in-residence, etc.

résumé (two acute accents)

R.S.V.P. (or R.s.v.p. or RSVP). Less traditional: rsvp. Do not use with *Please*.

rt. = the abbreviation for *right*

rte. = the abbreviation for *route*

semester-hour (A semester-hour is the same as a *credit-hour*)

semiannual = *every half year; twice a year*

semimonthly = *every half month; twice a month*

semiweekly = *every half week; twice a week*

seminary = today, this word refers to a *theological school*. In New York City, for example, Union Theological Seminary (Protestant) has working relations with St. Vladimir's Theological Seminary (Orthodox), General Theological Seminary (Episcopal), St. Joseph's Seminary (Catholic), and Jewish Theological Seminary.

But in the 19th century, seminary meant *private academy (high school)*.

In 1840, when girls' seminaries were springing up, the Maryland legislature established us as a "female seminary," named after our location, St. Mary's City. But in contrast to many other girls' seminaries, we were public.

simple = *plain, without adornment*

simplistic = a negative word, suggesting *oversimplified, unrealistic (A simplistic response to a complex question)*

SlackWater (one word but two caps; italicize this publication)

Sotterley

Southern Maryland

Starbucks (no apostrophe)

State = capitalize for official names of legal entities: *the State of Maryland was sued by the Office of Civil Rights.*

= capitalize a person's title *before* his/her name: *Whenever State Senator John Doe speaks, everyone listens carefully.*

state = lowercase when it stands alone or is simply an adjective: *the state increased our appropriation last year. No state funds can be used for private roads.*

= lowercase a political title when it comes *after* the name: *John Doe, a state senator, always speaks well.*

statehouse = lowercase for generic use: *He likes to visit statehouses.*

Statehouse = capitalize for specific buildings: *the Statehouse in Annapolis; the Reconstructed Statehouse of 1676 in St. Mary's City*

stet = Latin: *let it stand*. Meaning, the editor started to make a correction but changed his mind and decided that what you wrote should stand unchanged.

summa cum laude = Latin, *with highest praise*. See also *cum laude* and *magna cum laude*.

T-shirt

tea (see high tea)

theater

titled (*The poem was titled "The Monster in the Duck Pond."*) Do not use *entitled*.

titles of publications: italics for books, newspapers, plays, boats. Quotation marks for shorter items such as articles, stories, poems. TV programs, etc.

upcoming

use = noun (good *use* of our time)

use = verb (Let's *use* the new equipment)

usage = noun, referring only to language (*Usage* of 'whilst' is unknown in America.)

utilize = verb, *to make worthwhile use of* (*We utilized every last cent we had.*) Prefer *use*.
The word *utilize* is often unnecessary. Use it sparingly.

v. = *versus*, when referring to legal decisions (*Brown v. Board of Education*)

vs. = *versus*, when referring to sports (Harvard *vs.* Yale)

VISA (all caps, but only when referring to the credit card)

VISTA (all caps)

Web, Web site, Web page, Web server (capital *W*, and avoid joining the words)

weeklong

white (lowercase when referring to a racial group, except in a group name: (*Two white men in town belong to the White Aryan Resistance.*) See also *black*.

wide (*campuswide, statewide, nationwide, worldwide*)

yearlong

NAME of THE COLLEGE

At First Mention

While there are several colleges across the United States named “St. Mary’s,” there is only one St. Mary’s College of Maryland. Therefore, to avoid confusion, all of our documents should **give the full name at first mention**, somewhere near the opening. **At the same time, immediately provide the abbreviation (SMCM)** because you may want to use it later on if you are writing a contract or legal document.

Example: *St. Mary’s College of Maryland (SMCM) has just announced that it supports the state’s plans to build a light-rail transit from Ridge all the way up to Waldorf. (Unfortunately, there are no such plans.)*

At Second Mention and Thereafter

“The College” (with a capital C) is an easy and pleasant way to refer to St. Mary’s the second time around. For variety, we can also use “St. Mary’s” since we have already made clear in the opening paragraph that we are referring specifically to St. Mary’s College of Maryland.

Unless you are writing a contract or other legal document, try to avoid using the abbreviation SMCM. It works well on a sweatshirt because the College’s full name takes up too much space, but other than that, the abbreviation is ugly. A good rule of thumb is not to put into print anything we would not ordinarily say aloud in conversation. In conversation, one hears either “the College” or “St. Mary’s,” but not “SMCM.”

Example: *St. Mary’s College of Maryland (SMCM) has just announced that it supports the state’s plans to build a light-rail transit line from Ridge all the way up to Waldorf. Even though **the College** cannot itself contribute to the cost of the line, a **St. Mary’s** spokesperson has pledged that the school will build a 20-person shelter on the edge of Route 5 for persons waiting for the trolley. **St. Mary’s** should be applauded for such civic cooperation.*

The Honors College

Do not capitalize *honors college* unless it is part of a heading (as shown on the line above).

Example: *St. Mary’s was designated Maryland’s public honors college by the Maryland legislature in 1992.*

INVITATIONS

Preliminary: Your office should consider buying (or borrowing from the Publications Office) a copy of the 1994 how-to book from Rice University Press: *Forms of Address: A Guide for Business and Social Use* (Andrea Holberg, editor).

Each of its 200-plus pages is devoted to a specific type of official (U.S. or foreign) and shows the form of letter, envelope, place card, spoken introduction, and how to address this person in conversation.

Information: Check to see that your invitation includes the following:

- a) Who's giving the event?
- b) Reason for the event: wedding? dinner to honor someone special? anniversary celebration?
- c) Date (include the year), time, place
- d) Directions to location. If the invitation is formal, these instructions are provided on a separate piece of paper.
- e) Are you asking for a reply? Give full name of contact person, as well as phone number or e-mail address. On a formal invitation, use either the French "R.S.V.P." or the English "Please reply" – **but not both**.

Two Types of Invitation: **1. Very formal**, using the traditional hourglass format. Do not trivialize this format by using it for less significant occasions.

Example:

*Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Green
request the honor of your presence
at the marriage of their daughter
Ann
to Mr. James Bancroft
on Sunday, March twenty-first, two thousand and eight
at four o'clock in the afternoon
Interfaith Chapel
Brattleton, Vermont*

Did you notice? The entire invitation is only **one minimal sentence**. It has been formatted formally in order to make it beautiful and to set it apart from ordinary, everyday prose. Its style is classic.

INVITATIONS (continued)

2. Informal, casual – and do not use hourglass format.

Use your imagination! Lay out the invitation any way you want. And now that you are freed from the one-sentence, hourglass format, you can use as many sentences as you want – and in the language you want.

Examples:

a)

You're invited!

Ann Green and Jim Bancroft hope all their friends will join them as they exchange wedding vows on Sunday, March 21st, at the Interfaith Chapel in Brattleton, Vermont. The hour is 4:00, and dress is smart but comfortable.

An informal, sit-down lunch will follow in the Greens' backyard, 16 Court Street, and children are welcome. If you can come, please phone Ann's mother at 123-456-7890 or e-mail her: barbgreen@aol.com.

b)

Save the date! We're getting married in the little chapel on the campus of Merrick College, and we hope all our old friends from the Class of 2002 will watch as we make our vows at 3:00, Saturday, July 2, 2010. Professor Heinz (remember him?) will conduct the ceremony, and Bob Turner '99 is hosting a barbecue bash. Let one of us know if you'll be there. Hope to see you.

Rachel Robbins (321-654-7890)

Mark Hanson (321-654-0987)

RACE, ETHNICITY

Publications that represent special interest groups (in such areas as politics, religion, race) create their own editorial policies when it comes to capitalization. However, for general purposes, St. Mary's College follows the editorial guidelines of *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

1. **Complexion is not capitalized:** *yellow, tan, white, mixed, black, copper, colored, etc.*

Example: *He reported that 60 percent of the audience identified themselves as black, 30 percent as white, and 10 percent as mixed.*

Exception: Capitalize skin color when it is the name of an organization, or part of a title or heading: Example, *Black Student Union; White Aryan Resistance, etc.*

2. **Race and ethnicity are always capitalized:** *African American, American Indian, Arab, Asian, Berber, Caucasian, Hispanic, Jew, Lapp, Mayan, Maori, Native American, Negro, Polynesian, Sioux, etc.*

Note: *African American* is not hyphenated when it is a noun (**Example:** *He is an African American*), but it does take a hyphen when it acts as an adjective in front of the noun (**Example:** *She is an African-American student*).

STATES AND THEIR ABBREVIATIONS

Surprise!

We are not St. Mary's College of **MD**. Ever.

Those capitalized, double-block-letter abbreviations (MD, AL, OR, etc.) are meant for **postal addresses** only, and they were created to be read rapidly by an automated mailroom scanner and sorter. **The use of those capital letters is restricted to the mailing envelope** and the corresponding address at the opening of the letter inside.

When you read *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, you will notice that inside a sentence they spell out (in full) the name of a state. If space is tight, they use the original, older abbreviation.

Older, traditional abbreviations (but not for the envelope that goes through the post office scanner): *Ala., Ariz., Ark., Calif., Colo., D.C., Del., Fla., Ga., Ill., Ind., Kan., Ky., La., Md., Mass., Mich., Minn., Miss., Mo., Mont., N.C., N.D., Neb., N.H., N.J., N.M., N.Y., Okla., Ore., Pa., P.R., R.I., S.C., S.D., Tenn., Tex., Va., Vt., V.I., Wash., W.Va., Wis., Wyo.*

We are always **St. Mary's College of Maryland**.

But if space is tight, we use the older, non-postal abbreviation:
St. Mary's College of Md.

PUNCTUATION

A. Stops

B. Pauses

C. Interruptions, Insertions

D. Miscellaneous

A. STOPS

English has five complete stops.

The first three stops come at the end of a sentence, and the last two come **inside** a sentence:

- Stops at the end of a sentence:
- 1) . period
 - 2) ! exclamation point
 - 3) ? question mark
- Stops inside a sentence:
- 4) : full colon
 - 5) ; semi-colon

1. **The period.** Love it, love it, and go on loving it. Use it often in office writing. “Plain English” recommends that easily understood sentences be no longer than 27 words (2½ typewritten lines). To help your reader, use periods often.

2. **The exclamation point.** In adult writing, use sparingly, no more than one or two per page. Choose to let good writing convey your excitement. Three or more exclamation points per page are appropriate only when sighting UFOs or Elvis.

3. **The question mark.** To keep your reader awake and with you, occasionally try opening a dense paragraph with a rhetorical question. **Example:** Instead of opening with “*Fiscal constraints forced the Maryland legislature to . . .*”, try grabbing the reader’s interest with “*Why were College salaries frozen a few years ago? Because fiscal constraints . . .*” etc., etc. **Note:** the less often this strategy is used, the more effective it is.

4. **The semi-colon.** **Ninety (90) percent** of the time, the semi-colon acts **as a period inside a sentence**. It separates two related mini-sentences (called “independent clauses”). **Example:** “*Turn right at the fork in the road; after that, look for the first two-story house on your left.*” **Note:** For an entirely different use of the semi-colon (*10 percent of the time*), see below under **“B: PAUSES: #1-a.”**

5. **The full colon.** **(a) Use this to introduce a list.** **Example:** “*He bought several items at the store: pliers, wrench, hammer, calipers.*” **(b) Use a colon also for dramatic emphasis.** **Example:** “*She packed well for the cruise but forgot one important thing: cash.*” Do not capitalize the first word after the colon unless it begins an independent clause (with subject and verb). If this is the case, a capital letter is optional.

B. PAUSES: Commas

The comma. Commas indicate **tiny, split-second pauses**.

1. **Inside a simple list:** Commas are used to separate single items. **Example:** We’re traveling to Oregon, Montana, and Utah.
 - a. **But in a complex list,** items are separated by a semi-colon. **Example:** We traveled to Salem, Oregon; Red Bank, Montana; and Provo, Utah.

2. **Greetings, grabbers: Examples:** *Welcome, alumni! Thanks, Jack. Go, Seahawks! Hey, listen up. Sorry, everyone. Mark, how many people have signed up? Attention, all RAs:*
3. **Interruptions, explanations (see below, C-1).** Core sentence: *The committee will support the dean's decision.*
Interruption, with commas: *The committee, **although it does not want to**, will support the dean's decision.*
4. **Job description after a name:** *Rob Stuart, director of transportation, retired.*
5. **Separating two independent clauses (mini-sentences with subject and verb)** joined by *and, but, so, or, for, nor, yet:*
 - a) *The dean made the announcement, **and** then he left quickly.*
 - b) **But do not use a comma** if the second clause lacks a subject (*he*):
*The dean made an announcement **and** then left quickly.*
6. **Setting apart a dependent clause at the beginning of a sentence:**
 - a) *Although the heat is on, we feel cold.*
 - b) **But do not use a comma** when the dependent clause comes at the end:
We feel cold although the heat is on.
7. **To indicate speech.** Notice the difference between direct and indirect.
 - a) Direct quotation: *He said, "There are no termites."*
 - b) Direct quotation: *"There are no termites," he said.*
 - c) Indirect quotation: *He said that there were no termites.*

C. INTERRUPTIONS

An interruption is something that can be removed from the sentence **without damaging the sentence's core meaning**. For example, let's say the core is a very factual *"Uncle Dan appeared on our doorstep."* We can interrupt that core to make an explanation or personal comment (just as we do when we're talking). Our choice of punctuation determines whether the interruption is perceived as minor or dramatic.

1. **Minor interruption: use a set of commas**
*Uncle Dan, **who we thought was dead**, appeared on our doorstep.*
2. **Medium interruption: use a set of parentheses**
*Uncle Dan (**who we thought was dead**) appeared on our doorstep.*
3. **Dramatic interruption: use a set of em-dashes**
*Uncle Dan—**who we thought was dead**—appeared on our doorstep.*

Note: Em-dashes (and many other interesting marks) can be found on your computer by going to "Insert," then "Symbol."

D. MISCELLANEOUS MARKS: Apostrophes, Accents, Em-dashes, Hyphens,

1. Apostrophes

You will discover that the computer refuses to accept an apostrophe at the beginning of a word. You need to trick it by inserting the desired apostrophe into the middle of a two-word phrase. For example, type *the60s*. Now go back in and add an apostrophe, then insert a space before it:

the60s → *the'60s* → *the '60s*.

You will be happy to hear that apostrophes are dying out. Although some of the rules we all learned in seventh grade still hold, some have eased up. This loosening will increase over the next few decades, but in the meantime (because we are an educational institution) our readers expect us to do what is “correct.” Here are some common problem areas where we need to be careful:

(a) Apostrophes to show possession (for nouns)

Singular ('s): the *siren's* wail, *James's* voice (formerly, *James' voice*).

Clue: write it as you actually pronounce it.

Plural (s'): the *cyclists'* speed, the *Smiths'* plans, the *Harrisese's* children.

Plural exceptions ('s): *children's*, *women's*, *men's*.

Note: Sometimes it is not necessary to use a possessive ('s), and the result is grace. Grace and speed. Whenever possible, choose to use an ordinary adjective instead of a possessive adjective. What is lost is possibly an extra syllable and definitely a hissing sound.

Possible: - the church's bells

Possible: - the engine's vibration

Better: - the church bells

Better: - the engine vibration

Possible: - the College's waterfront

Possible: - the library's patio

Better: - the College waterfront

Better: - the library patio

When making these decisions, test them out loud. Your ear will judge.

(b) Apostrophes for Noun Plurals

No apostrophe: the *dogs*, the *churches*, the *Harts*, the *Harrisese*.

(But, to show possession, *the Harts' dog*, *the Harrisese's car*.)

Apostrophe to show plural for special items: *pdf's*; two *m's* in *accommodate*; the *1960's*, the *'60's*, two *CD's* from the bank, new *RA's*, their *SMP's*.

BUT: Recently the last few items have eased up, and now the following are accepted in the best publications: the *1960s*, the *'60s*, two *CDs*, new *RAs*, the *GPs*, their *SMPs*. Caution: an apostrophe must be used if all the letters are in lowercase: *pdf's*.

(c) Apostrophes for Contractions

Sometimes an apostrophe is like a tombstone: it indicates where one or more letters have “died.”

It's = *it is*

(*It's* a great party.)

It's = *it has*

(*It's* been a good year.)

Doesn't = *does not*

(The weather *doesn't* look favorable.)

We've = *we have*

(*We've* been waiting for over an hour.)

Of course, there are dozens more.

Note: contractions express how we naturally speak English. Occasionally one hears of older schoolteachers who did not permit students to use contractions. To test whether you want to use a contraction or not, read the sentence **aloud** to yourself. Your ear is a far better judge than your eye.

(d) Apostrophes for class years

Jane Doe '03 (For typing tip, see D-1, “Apostrophes,” on previous page)

2. Accents

English is a language without accents. The rare exception is when a “grave accent” indicates that a normally unpronounced syllable should be pronounced.

Example: “Blessèd are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.”

But English also borrows heavily from other languages, and such foreign words sometimes retain their original accents. To type these accents, go to “Insert,” then “Symbol.” **Examples:**

The Spanish **tilde** (~) is retained in *el niño*;

Spanish and French **acute accents** remain in *café, café au lait; résumé*;

The French **circumflex** (^) is retained in *pâté*;

The French **grave accent** remains in *à la carte*;

The **cedilla** (ç) remains in *Français* and is pronounced like an “s.”

The German **umlaut** (¨) is retained when writing *Gewürztraminer* wine.

When should one use an accent?

- (a) Use accents to avoid confusing two different words. Examples: rose vs. the wine *rosé*; *resume* vs. *résumé*; *expose* vs. *exposé*; etc.
- (b) Use accents when printing out the menu for a College dinner: *apéritif, Bon Appétit, canapés, chicken à la king, crème fraîche, duck à l’orange, entrée, Gewürztraminer, jalapeño peppers, pêches flambées, rémoulade sauce, rosé, salade niçoise, Nestlé chocolate*, etc.
- (c) As a courtesy, use accents for foreign titles and names. Examples: *señor, señora, señorita, Abbé, Père, José, Björn, Franzén, Cézanne, Dvořák*, etc. Check your English dictionary.

3. Dashes and Hyphens

(a) Dashes (—)

(The proper term is “em-dash” because it’s the same width as the capital letter **M**)

A dash is not a grown-up hyphen. Whereas a hyphen appears in the middle of a **word**, a dash appears in the middle of a **sentence** – or at the end. It sets off groups of words or phrases. (See Section C-3, “Interruptions.”)

A genuine em-dash may be found on the keyboard under Insert, then Symbol. Or you can make one yourself by typing two hyphens close together. Should one enter a space at both ends of a dash? Some grammarians say yes, others no. Whatever you choose, be consistent throughout your document.

Example: *George Wells--never known for shyness--nominated himself.*

Or: *George Wells – never known for shyness – nominated himself.*

(b) **Hyphens (-)**

A hyphen joins together two words in order to form **one idea, one word**.

Inconsistencies abound, so – when in doubt -- it is best to check with a dictionary to see the accepted spelling of the word you are wondering about.

1. On the other hand, **compound adjectives** call for special explanation. A compound adjective is simply two words that **immediately precede the underlined noun** they are describing. A few examples of this principle:

my two-week vacation
a three-legged stool
a study-abroad program
that well-known author
a no-credit course
some first-year students
that stay-awake presentation

2. But notice there is no hyphen when the description **comes after the noun**:

my vacation of two weeks
a stool with three legs
a program for studying abroad
that author who is well known
a course with no credit
some students in their first year
that presentation where the audience stayed awake.

3. **Exception to the rule about compound adjectives:**

Do not use a hyphen when the compound adjective has an adverb ending in **-ly**:

an internationally volatile incident
a regularly scheduled meeting
some creatively inclined students
a badly flawed argument
the specially reduced sofa

CAPITALIZATION

A. PEOPLE

When it comes to recognizing other people, most of us are afraid of appearing disrespectful. As a result, we over-compensate by over-capitalizing.

When do we capitalize such words as *president* or *trustee* or *pope*?
Or *provost*, *professor*, *chair*, or *vice president*? Less often than you'd think.

As in real estate, the grammar rule is simple: location, location, location.

That is, if the word in question (for example, *president*) is located **BEFORE the person's name**, it is regarded as a **title** and therefore **capitalized** (as in Mr., Ms.).

1. When President Clinton was given a dog, he named it "Buddy."
2. In 1981, Trustee Eleanor Harrington became Chairman Harrington.
3. As Professor Peter Taylor called the students forward, Department Chair Martha Wayne led them to Provost John Boyd, who distributed the prizes.
4. The monarch who abdicated in 1936 was King Edward VIII.
5. When the Twin Towers were attacked, Mayor Giuliani was there in minutes.
6. In 1958, Cardinal Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli became Pope John XXIII.

But when the word in question (again, *president*) is located **AFTER the person's name**, it is simply regarded as a **job description** and therefore **not capitalized**.

- 1-a. Bill Clinton, president, named his dog "Buddy."
- 2-a. Eleanor Harrington, a trustee, became chairman of the board in 1981.
- 3-a. Peter Taylor, a biology professor, called the students forward while Martha Wayne, chair of the department, led them to John Boyd, the provost.
- 4-a. The king who abdicated in 1936 married a Baltimorean, Wallis Simpson.
- 5-a. When the Twin Towers were attacked, the mayor of New York was there in minutes.
- 6-a. Before he became pope, Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli was a cardinal.

If you find this distinction about "location" hard to believe, take a good look at your *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, or *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Seeing is believing.

B. THE COLLEGE – and HISTORIC ST. MARY'S CITY

1. The description "honors college" is not capitalized -- except in a heading.
2. When referring to our own institution, we indulge ourselves by capitalizing "the College." This is standard professional practice.
3. Similarly, on second mention Historic St. Mary's City becomes "the City."

C. BUILDINGS, PLACES

1. **Named buildings:** capitalize, and omit the word “Room.” *Schaefer 106, Ethel Chance Hall, Daugherty-Palmer Commons, Queen Anne, Geneva Boone House, Montgomery Hall 25*, etc.
2. **Un-named buildings, preceded by the word “the”:** Use lowercase. *The science building, the library, the rectory, the townhouses, the health center, the residence halls, the campus center, the bell tower, the hill, the waterfront*, etc.
3. **Exceptions:** if a room number has to be provided, capitalize the building, even if unnamed: *Library 321, Campus Center 150*.
4. **Special rooms:** capitalize Blackistone Room, Great Room, etc.
5. **Outdoor areas, not used with “the”:** *Townhouse Green, Church Point, St. John’s Pond, Townhouse Pond*, etc.

D. EVENTS

Capitalize annual campus events: *Awards Convocation, Cardboard Boat Race, Early Decision, Family Weekend, Goodpaster Lecture, Orientation, Regular Decision, Room Draw, Spring Break, Winter Break, World Carnival*, etc.

E. OFFICES, ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS AND PROGRAMS

1. Capitalize official names: *Office of Residence Life, Office of Student Activities, Public Safety Office, Admissions, Biology Department, Office of Publications, Office of Human Resources*, etc.
2. But lowercase subsequent references to *the office, the department, the program*

F. COMMITTEES, GROUPS, CLUBS

1. Capitalize full name, but use lowercase in a shortened follow-up: *Board of Trustees, the board; St. Mary’s College of Maryland Foundation, the foundation; Academic Affairs Committee, the committee; Transportation Task Force, the task force; Faculty Senate, the senate; Patuxent River Naval Air Station, the base; Outdoors Club, the club*; etc.

G. ACADEMIC SUBJECTS, COURSES

1. Lowercase: subjects, majors: *anthropology, biology*, etc.
2. Capitalize languages and geographic locations: *Spanish, East Asian*, etc).
3. Capitalize: specific, numbered courses: *Anthropology 250; Biology 470*.
4. Quote marks: titles of courses (“*Infant and Child Development*”)

Example: *He is double-majoring in art and East Asian Studies, so this semester he’s taking Art History 332, “Chinese and Japanese Art.”*

NUMBERS

(Rough advice in an area riddled with inconsistencies)

1. In general

- a) Use **digits** for all numbers that have two or more digits: *10, 11, 263, 1,968*.
- b) Use **words** for all numbers that have only one digit: *one, six, nine*.
- c) Do not open a sentence with digits. Re-phrase it:
No: **1998** was a good year for dog-sledding.
Yes: *The year 1998 was a good one for dog-sledding.*
- d) To avoid confusion, physically separate numbers with different functions:
No: *In **2001**, **200** people volunteered.*
Yes: *In 2001, the number of volunteers was 200.*

2. Money

- a) Use digits for small, straightforward amounts: *a \$150 pledge*.
- b) For large amounts, use the words *million, billion*, etc. Example: *The \$9.5 million building was named for her father*. Notice that the dollar sign (\$) replaces the need to write out the word *dollar* or *dollars*.
- c) Custom dictates spelling out such commonplace phrases as **million-dollar smile**; odds of a **million to one**; etc.
- d) **In any currency**, use digits, even for numbers below ten. Examples: *8 cents each, 35 pounds, 4 euros, 75 dalasis*, etc.

3. Percents, fractions, decimals

- a) Spell out *percent*, except in graphs. **Example**: *He generally tips 20 percent*.
- b) Spell out and hyphenate stand-alone fractions below the number one: *one-third, three-fourths*, etc.
- c) Use digits for fractions and decimals when they are part of a unit: *4½ percent interest; 8.3 on the Richter scale; 3.6 feet of snow*.

4. Measurement

- a) Except in graphs and charts, do not use symbols for inches and feet. Use words for the type of measurement (feet, kilometers, credits, semester-hours), and digits for the amount: *He stands 6 feet 4 inches; The office rug is 9 by 12 feet; His course is listed as 3 credits*.
- b) Use hyphens if the above figures are placed as an adjective before the noun:
Examples: *a 6-foot-4-inch man; the 9-by-12-foot rug; his 3-credit course*.

5. Age

- a) Use digits for people and animals: *He is 52 years old. But, a 52-year-old man*.
- b) Use words to describe vague ages for people: *He looks to be in his forties, but actually he's in his fifties*.
- c) For things: Use words for ages nine and under, and use digits for 10 and above: *the three-day flu; a 15-day Iditarod; a building that is 75 years old*.

6. Decades

- a) **At first mention**, no apostrophe: *the 1960s, the 1930s*.
- b) **Thereafter**, shorten, and use an apostrophe: *the '60s, the '30s*. (Note: you will discover that the computer refuses to accept an apostrophe at the beginning of a word. You need to trick it by putting the desired apostrophe in the middle of a two-word phrase. **For example**, type *the 60s*. Now go back in and type an apostrophe, then add a space before it:
the 60s → *the'60s* → *the '60s*.)
- c) **For historic decades**, use capitalized words: *the Gay Nineties* (1890s), *the Roaring Twenties* (1920s), *the Sixties* (1960s).

7. Athletics (see also pp. 30-31, "Athletics")

- a) Scores are always given in digits (*14-1*).
- b) Rankings are in digits, preceded by the abbreviation No. (*The committee seeded Massachusetts No. 1 and Georgetown No. 2*). Do not use the symbol (#)
- c) However, when ordinal numbers are used (*first, second, ninth, etc.*), the number does not appear as a digit but as a word (*Virginia Tech was seeded ninth*.)
- d) Finally, when that ordinal number is used before an adjective like *ranked* or *seeded*, a hyphen is added, making it a compound adjective (the *second-seeded team* in the area).

In short:

The Hoyas are No. 4.

The Hoyas are ranked fourth.

The fourth-ranked Hoyas are predicted to win.

And while we're talking about sports:

- e) The word *team* is a collective noun and is supposed to take a singular verb (The team *has* arrived and *wants* to start. The team lost *its* best shot when *it* partied too late last night.)

But if you don't like that, chop the team into its individual parts (*members, players*) and use a plural verb (The players *have* arrived and *want* to start. The team members lost *their* best shot when *they* partied too late last night).

8. When are hyphens used in numbers?

- a) in cardinal numbers 21 to 99: *twenty-three, ninety-one, one hundred ninety-six*.
- b) in ordinal numbers 21 to 99: *twenty-third, ninety-first, one hundred ninety-sixth*.
- c) when the number is a compound adjective (two words) **before** the noun:
a first-year course, a nineteenth-century novel, a fourth-place finish, a twenty-point increase.
- d) but no hyphen when the number **follows** the noun: a course *in the first year*, a novel of the nineteenth century, he placed *fourth*, an increase of *twenty points*.

ATHLETICS

The following is a boiled-down version of the style and language used on the sports pages of both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*.

A. NUMBERS

Scores, rankings, and players' measurements follow special rules in sports writing:

Scores: All game scores are written as digits, not words.

Example: *St. Mary's beat Salisbury, 4-3.*

Rankings: In the case of cardinal numbers (*one, two, three, etc.*), the word "number" is abbreviated to "No." and followed by a digit.

Example: *The committee seeded Georgetown No. 2.*

In the case of ordinal numbers (*first, second, third*), use full words.

Example: *Georgetown was seeded second in the region.*

Player information: Use digits all around.

Example: *The 19-year-old is an impressive 6'9" and weighs 280.*

EXCEPTIONS to the all-digits rule in sports writing: **When writing numbers that do not deal specifically with scores, rankings, or player information**, follow the non-sports rule that numbers 10 and above are written as digits, while numbers nine and below appear as words.

Example: *Their team got 11 hits and six walks.*

Example: *It was our ninth victory in 10 games.*

Example: *They scored four runs in the fifth.*

B. GRAMMAR

Words that sound the same are often written as one word when they function as nouns and adjectives but as two words when used as verbs:

Example: *It was an exciting playoff.* (noun)

They played off for the victory. (verb)

Example: *The game was a shutout.* (adjective or noun)

They shut out their opponents. (verb)

Example: *It was a strikeout.* (noun)

He struck out in the ninth inning. (verb)

C. APOSTROPHES – Yes or No?

No **apostrophe** when a noun decides to become a plural (that is, to increase in number).

Examples: one Seahawk	several Seahawks
one Oriole	several Orioles
one coach	several coaches

But an apostrophe is required when that same word stops being a noun and instead becomes a possessive adjective that describes the noun following it. (HUH ?)

Examples: one <i>Seahawk's</i> uniform	several <i>Seahawks'</i> uniforms
one <i>player's</i> excitement	several <i>players'</i> excitement
one <i>coach's</i> skill	several <i>coaches'</i> skills
	a <i>boys'</i> lacrosse camp
	a <i>girls'</i> soccer camp

D. VOCABULARY (words often used in sports write-ups and calendars)

- 1) All-American (noun); all-America (adjective)
- 2) Christmas vacation: change to *Winter Break*
- 3) coach: not capitalized unless it comes right before the person's name
Example: *One of the new coaches is Coach Weller.*
- 4) Division III: use the capital letter "i," not the digit "1"
- 5) Easter vacation: change to *Spring Break*
- 6) Gallaudet
- 7) goal line, goal post
- 8) goalkeeper, goaltender
- 9) honors college: no apostrophe, and not capitalized
- 10) it's = *it has; it is*
Example: *It's been snowing and it's quiet outside.*
- 11) its = a possessive similar to *his* or *her*
Example: *Their team lost its nerve after the half.*
- 12) Johns Hopkins: university named for the Johns family and the Hopkins family
- 13) led = the past tense of *lead*
Example: *Our team led in the fourth quarter.*
- 14) T-shirt
- 15) U.S. Merchant **Marine** Academy (here, *Marine* has no "s")

MUSIC: Guidelines for Notes and Bios in Concert Programs

In writing about music for its concert programs, the College follows the style and practices of both *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*. Read their concert reviews, and notice how readable they are, how they differ from the requirements laid out by such *academic* style guides as MLA, Chicago, APA, Turabian, etc.

Below, italics are used to show examples of word usage, **but italics are not meant to be used in concert programs.**

1. **Symphonies, Concertos, Suites, etc.:** do no more than capitalize.

Capitalize all principal words in a title, but do not use underlining, italics, or quotation marks (Schubert's Piano Trio in E-flat). In subsequent references within a paragraph, however, use lowercase (but do not italicize) *the trio, the suite, the quartet, the symphony, the concerto, etc.* **Example:** *He brought fresh insights to the concerto.*

Key signatures: do not specify *Major* (it is assumed), but capitalize *Minor*.

Spell out *sharp* and *flat* in lowercase; do not use the symbols # or *b*. *The Washington Post* specifies a hyphen (*F-sharp*), but *The New York Times* does not (*F sharp*); whichever style you choose, stick with it throughout the printed program. Capitalize tempo, but lowercase the movements (Example: *the Adagio section in the second movement*). Abbreviate *Opus* (*Op. or op.*) and enclose it within parentheses. Use the abbreviations *No.* and *Nos.* (or *no.* and *nos.*) – but do not use the symbols # or #s.

If the work is also known by a popular name, place it inside quotation marks (“Drum Roll”). Do not use an ampersand (&) for the word *and* unless it is so specified by the composer (that is, do not write Prokofiev's “Romeo & Juliet”).

Below are six examples that follow the style guides of *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*:

Schubert's Quintet in A for Piano and Strings (“The Trout”)
Rachmaninoff's Prelude in C-sharp Minor
Dvořák's Symphony No. 9 in E Minor (the “New World”)
Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 in C Minor (Op. 67)
Vivaldi's The Four Seasons (Op. 8, nos. 1-4)
Beethoven's Symphony No. 6 in F (the “Pastorale”)

2. **Operas, Operettas, Musicals, Ballets:** use quotation marks.

“La Bohème”; “Die Walküre”; “Porgy and Bess”; “South Pacific”; “Swan Lake.”
Subsequent references: lowercase *to the opera, the ballet, etc.*

3. **Masses and Requiems:** do not lowercase, even in subsequent references.

Brahms' German Requiem (*The chorus will perform his Requiem*)
J.S. Bach, Mass in B Minor (*Bach's best-known Mass*)
Ariel Ramírez, Misa Criolla (*A folk Mass from Argentina*)

For specific sections within a Mass or Requiem, use quotation marks. For example, the “Sanctus” in the Bach B Minor Mass; the section “Behold, All Flesh is as the Grass” from Brahms' German Requiem.

4. **Songs, Arias, and Oratorios**: use quotation marks. For works in a Romance language (French, Spanish, Italian, etc.) capitalize only the first word (“O sole mio”). For German works, capitalize the first word and all nouns; for English works, capitalize the first word and all major words. For example, contrast the English “Wake, Wake, for Night is Flying” with the German “Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme.”

5. **Musical Styles and Periods**: capitalize when referring to specific historical periods: Baroque, Classical, Renaissance, Romantic, etc. (*Schubert is generally regarded as a Romantic composer*). But use lowercase when referring to style alone, not to a historical period: for example, *Frank Sinatra was more romantic in style than Peggy Lee*.

6. **Instruments, Performers, Jobs**: use lowercase for such job descriptions as *conductor, first violin, principal trumpet, concertmaster, associate professor of music, artist-in-residence, president, etc.* But when the term **precedes** the person’s name, use a capital letter (unless your instinct tells you it looks silly). That is, notice the difference between the mere job description (*He was artist-in-residence last year*) versus the full-blown title that precedes the name (*When Artist-in-Residence Pedro Romero met his first class ...*)

7. **Names of Groups, Festivals, etc.**: capitalize.

Chesapeake Orchestra, Casals Festival, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, River Concert Series.

8. **Recordings (CDs, albums, tapes)**: Capitalize titles of recordings and place them inside quotation marks. However, do not use quotation marks for the company label: The Maryland Bach Aria Group’s compact disc, “The Italian Voyage”; the 78 rpm Commodore single of Billie Holiday singing “Strange Fruit”; Brian Ganz’s 1992 recording debut on the Gailly label in Belgium.

9. **Awards, Prizes**: Capitalize a specific, named prize, but lowercase all others: the Kennedy Center Friedheim Award; a second prize in the competition.

10. **Television, Radio**: Use quotation marks. “Live from Lincoln Center”; “Performance Today.”

11. **Newspapers and Magazines**: Use italics. *Newsweek; The Boston Globe*.

12. **Academic Degrees**: lowercase the name of the degree but capitalize the initials.

a) a bachelor of arts; a master of sacred music; a doctorate.

b) a bachelor’s in math; a master’s in sacred music; a doctorate in musicology

c) a B.A.; an M.S.M.; a Ph.D.

Biographies of College performers, composers, and scholars:

A concert program is not a public relations document, and therefore it eschews the language of “hype,” much of which is **unverifiable** and which contains words that end with the superlative *-st*: **for example**, *best, first, most, greatest, highest, strongest, etc.*

To be credible, a good bio contains **verifiable facts**. For example, we cannot offer the **opinion**, *Jane Doe is as good a classroom teacher as she is a musician*. **It’s not verifiable**. Instead, we can cite a **verifiable fact**: *Year after year, Jane Doe has received high evaluations in the Music Department for her work in the classroom*. Nor can we say, *Jane Doe displays a truly Christian concern for her students*. We can, however, quote her own words: *Jane Doe has often said, “I feel such a Christian empathy for all my students.”*

Further, in the case of guest performers coming to campus, serious editing has to be undertaken to delete the “hype” language of public relations that originates not only from the performers themselves but especially from their agents. Again, watch out for such superlatives (words ending in *-st*) as *best*, *finest*, etc.

However, enthusiastic plaudits can appear in critical commentary that comes from sources **outside the College** but not from public relations agents: that is, **professional reviews** from leading newspapers and magazines, American and otherwise. For example, to quote from Eliza Garth’s College bio: *In the Boston Phoenix*, critic Scott Wheeler wrote that “this [CD] release would be important if only to help fill a gap in the discography of American music. Fortunately, Eliza Garth’s graceful and lucid performances make it a disc to treasure.” The College’s editorial policy has been to include roughly three such professional accolades per bio, and College musicians regularly update their bios to include recent, favorable reviews.

At first mention, an artist’s name is bolded and given in full (**Brian Ganz**) with no honorific title such as Mr. or Ms. In subsequent references: use full name (no longer bolded), or just the last name with an honorific (Mr. Ganz; Ms. Garth). Persons with earned doctorates are referred to as *Dr.* (Dr. Conrad). It is inappropriate, on a concert program, to refer to anyone by first name alone (Brian, Eliza).

If the concert program is to include biographical information on a composer who is not on the College faculty, care must be taken when presenting that information to the concertgoer. That is, well-known **facts** do not need to be acknowledged (Beethoven was born in Bonn in 1770), but **opinions** gleaned from a reference work require acknowledgment. Articles from *New Grove*, for instance, always give the name of the scholar who wrote the article, and his/her **opinion** needs to be briefly and gracefully acknowledged. This can be done with such introducers as *Music historian John Alan Conrad points out that ... or Albéniz scholar France Barulich suggests that ... or James Pritchett, John Cage’s biographer, has described Cage’s later compositional techniques as “sonic paint.”* Such attribution is not only honest (that is, obviously not plagiarized) but it also impresses the concertgoer with what is expected from a liberal arts college: scholarly integrity.

ALUMNUS ? ALUMNA ? ALUMNI ? ALUMNAE ?

All the above spellings are correct.

But choose the wrong one, and you might be in gender trouble.

In classical Latin, the last letter or two of a noun or adjective indicates that something is either masculine or feminine, either singular or plural.

Alumnus = one male (Dirk Griffith is an alumnus)

Alumna = one female (Anne Henderson Marum is an alumna)

Alumni = two or more males; also, a mixed male and female group
(Alumni Reunion was a big success)

Alumnae = two or more females (Jane Rowe and Kat Ryner are alumnae)

BUT REALISTICALLY:

If you never had Latin in school, do you want to have to start memorizing its grammar now?

Probably not. And there's an easy way out. Just shorten the Latin word so that it turns into an English word. If we shorten the word to its root, *alum*, then we can just add the English "s" to make it plural (*alum*, *alums* -- as in *house*, *houses*).

Examples:

He thought he might be the only **alum** without a date.
Several **alums** asked to go out on one of the sailboats.

ACADEMIC DEGREES

Academic degrees have been earned through an accredited course of study (curriculum) that usually includes research, papers, labs, and exams. At Commencement, the provost -- as top-ranked member of the faculty and guarantor of the academic curriculum -- awards these degrees to those who have earned them.

(An honorary degree, on the other hand, is only a public gesture. It is not academic and therefore is not awarded by the provost but by the president of the College and the trustees. See page 19, “Honorary Degrees.”)

Academic Degrees

Below, notice that the name of the degree (or its shortened form) is in lowercase, but the abbreviation for that degree is in capital letters.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. a bachelor of arts
a bachelor's
a B.A. | Ex.: He graduated with a bachelor of arts degree.
He got his bachelor's last June.
He has a B.A. |
| 2. a master of arts in teaching
a master's
an M.A.T. | Ex.: Her degree was a master of arts in teaching.
She got her master's last June.
She's working on an M.A.T. |
| 3. a doctoral degree
a doctorate
a Ph.D. | Ex.: That job requires a doctoral degree.
That job requires a doctorate.
I completed a Ph.D. in chemistry. |

Note: “A.B.D.” is not a degree. It is informal shorthand that means “All But Dissertation.” It refers to graduate students who have completed the required course work, passed their major field exams, and now are working on the required dissertation (a book-length study). Often they are hired by a college at the entry-level rank of “instructor.” After they have finished the dissertation, defended it to their graduate faculty, and finally received the Ph.D. or other doctorate, their rank is advanced to “assistant professor.” But until then, they are casually known as ABDs and may not be addressed as “Dr.” See page 14, “TITLES – for Faculty” on the flip side of this booklet, Section Two.

CITATIONS for HONOREES

Over the course of a year, the College confers honors on special individuals. They may be given an **honorary degree** at Commencement, or they may be inducted into one of the College's **four honorary societies**. These societies are as follows: (1) the Order of the Ark and Dove, est. 1972 ("for distinguished service to the College"); (2) the Order of the Mulberry Tree, est. 1978 ("for distinguished service to the arts"); (3) the Order of Lord Baltimore, est. 1980 ("for distinguished public service" – men only); and (4) the Order of Margaret Brent, est. 1986 ("for distinguished public service" – women only).

Whatever the occasion, a written "citation" is prepared, printed up on good stock, read aloud to the recipient, and then presented to him/her. If the citation (or "expression of appreciation") is for an honorary degree, it must fit inside the College folder in which it is presented. The folder is 9 x 11½ and available in the Publications Office. If the citation is for one of the four Orders (or any other, more general, occasion) it may also be presented in the regulation folder, but if it is long and has to be printed on stock that is 11 x 17, then the College folder cannot be used.

The official College medallion (bronze, three inches in diameter) is also presented to the honoree on all the above occasions. The recipient's name is usually inscribed on the reverse side. The medallions are currently (2009) available in the Office of Development.

Writing the Citation:

Two questions to be asked before any writing begins:

1. What does the College want to thank this person for?
2. What would the honoree like to hear himself/herself thanked for?

Interview (in person, over the phone, or by e-mail) a few people who know the honoree and have actually worked with him or her. Typically, those interviewees will agree on one or two points, but – always – each person will have his own special insight to contribute, and such individual perceptions help to make an interesting sketch.

Write the citation in Plain English (pp. 2-3) and make the tone warm -- but not gushy. The Publications Office maintains files of past citations, and it may help to take a look at one that is recent.

Be sure to include **the date** somewhere on the citation. It needs to be signed by the president of the College, and, if it is for an honorary degree, **the chair of the board of trustees** must also sign.

A copy of the citation must be provided to the College Archives.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

What's the difference between an abbreviation and an acronym? An **abbreviation** is just a set of initials, like SMCM. An **acronym**, on the other hand, is a set of initials that is pronounced as a word. For example, AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome).

1. Abbreviations

Abbreviations should be written exactly as the organization prefers. Some abbreviations include periods, but some do not. (Over the next few decades, it is likely that these periods will disappear.) A few examples:

A.A.	Alcoholics Anonymous; also Arts Alliance
AFSCME	American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees
G.I.	government issue
I.Q.	intelligence quotient
M.A.T.	master of arts in teaching (note the lowercase)
MOU	memorandum of understanding
N.A.A.C.P.	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

2. Acronyms -- abbreviations that are pronounced as words

Acronyms should also be written just as the organization prefers. Sometimes all letters of an acronym are in capital letters, and sometimes only the first letter is capitalized. More rarely, the acronym has become such a part of the language, and its origins so forgotten, that it is treated as a "normal" word – that is, no capitals at all (see *jeep*). Examples of acronyms:

jeep	<u>G.P.</u> (General Purpose car – WW II, military)
laser	<u>l</u> ight <u>a</u> mplification by <u>s</u> timulated <u>e</u> mission of <u>r</u> adiation
MHEC	Maryland Higher Education Commission (pronounced "em-hek")
NASA	<u>N</u> ational <u>A</u> eronautics and <u>S</u> pace <u>A</u> dministration
PIN	<u>P</u> ersonal <u>I</u> dentification <u>N</u> umber
radar	<u>r</u> adio <u>d</u> etection and <u>r</u> anging
scuba	<u>s</u> elf- <u>c</u> ontained <u>u</u> nderwater <u>b</u> reathing <u>a</u> pparatus
yuppie	young <u>u</u> rban <u>p</u> rofessional
ZIP code	<u>Z</u> one <u>I</u> mprovement

Exception: Capitalize skin color when it is the name of an organization, or part of a title or heading:

Example, Black Student Union; White Aryan Resistance, etc.

YOUR ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE NEEDS ONE OF EACH:

- COLLEGE Catalogue, published annually. In addition to academic courses, the back pages of the Catalog provide useful information on members of faculty and staff. It is the College's legal document.
- COLLEGE "Style Guide for College Logo and Seahawk Mascot" (2007, Publications Office). Illustrated.
- COLLEGE "The Quick Fix: Helps for Office Writing" (January 2009, Publications Office). Dual focus on writing and information about the College.
- COLLEGE "St. Mary's: A 'When-did?' Timeline" (2007, St. Mary's Press). Provides dates (from 1840 to 2007) for both the College and Historic St. Mary's City. Illustrated.
- COLLEGE "Writing for the Web" (June 2008). Online only, under Publications Office."
- DICTIONARY Either a 7x10 desk size, or a 4x7 pocket-size paperback. Particularly good is the Webster "New American College Dictionary" (pocket-size). The "boxes" on each page are helpful.
- DATA The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) keeps accurate, official data and statistics on the state's public colleges and universities. These may be accessed online. Also, the College collects data and tables, many of which can be accessed in an online pdf through the Office of Institutional Research.

For older data, contact the archivist in the library.

