

THE MIT NEWS STYLE GUIDE

Amended September 2025

With a few exceptions, MIT News follows Associated Press Style guidelines. If something is not covered here, or for further details, consult the latest “Associated Press Style Book.” To check spellings or terms not included there, consult the “Webster’s New World College Dictionary.”

3D, 2D Do not hyphen. However, “three-dimensional” and “two-dimensional” still take a hyphen.

academic degrees: Do not use periods. *BS, MArch, MBA, MCP, MEng, MS, PhD, ScD.*

In common parlance, the degree type (bachelor’s, master’s) should come first, so that it’s “BS” or “MS.” *She earned an MS from Princeton University prior to completing her doctorate at MIT.*

Note that “BS” and “MS” are flipped to “SB” and “SM” when listing MIT graduate years. *Timothy Beaver SM ’93 was president of his class.*

See also **alumni** and **apostrophes**.

accent marks: Limit accent marks for better online usability. Accents on people’s names are usually okay, but when writing metadata, be sure to include keywords without the accent marks as well.

acronyms: Avoid using an acronym in the lede, except for those that never need be spelled out (see below).

The following acronyms never need be spelled out, though if first mention uses the spelled-out version that’s okay: MIT, ROTC, FBI, NASA, IEEE, LEED, CERN, NCAA, PVC, LED, IBM, GOP, and USA.

Unless an acronym is widely known (see above) or must be used more than a few times in the story, try to avoid it altogether by using general terms on second reference.

If an acronym must be used, spell it out on first reference, followed by the acronym in parentheses. FOUR exceptions: “AI” may be used for “artificial intelligence”; “PI” may be used for “principal investigator”; “IT” may be used for “information technology”; and “NGO” may be used for “non-governmental organization” after an initial use of the full term without defining it in parentheses. *The Laboratory for Computer Science (LCS) will implement a new course. Principal investigator Sangeeta Bhatia is a multi-tasker. As a PI, she’s responsible for grant proposals, teaching, mentoring, and overseeing postdocs.*

Don't use periods with most acronyms. One exception: U.S. should always have periods, except in the headline. So should B.C.E./C.E.

In general, don't define an acronym in parentheses if you aren't going to use the acronym elsewhere in the story.

A.D.

See **B.C.E. / C.E.**

addresses, street

Abbreviate "Street" and "Avenue" if they're part of a numbered address; otherwise, spell them out. Street numbers are always numerical. *His house is at 9 Smith St. He lived on Smith Street.*

Use lower case when two or more names are involved. *The intersection of Main and Albany streets.*

addresses, MIT

Capitalize "room" for a singular location, and don't abbreviate. *Room 54-100, Building E23*

Lowercase when listing more than one location: *Commencement can be viewed remotely in rooms 1-123, 4-145, 56-114 and E25-11.*

When listing both a common/proper name and building or room number, common name should generally go first. *Attendees should meet in the lobby of the Green Building (Building 54). The event will be held in the Bush Room (Room 10-105).*

Common locations and acceptable abbreviations on second mention:

Stratton Student Center — "Stratton" or "the student center"

Ray and Maria Stata Center — "Stata Center"

Kresge Auditorium — "Kresge"

admissions

Only capitalize in conjunction with "MIT" or "Office," or as part of a person's official title. *The Admissions Office. He worked for MIT Admissions. She scoured the undergraduate admissions website. She is the assistant director of admissions. Dean of Admissions Jane Doe.*

See also **early/regular action, capitalization of common nouns.**

advisor

Use the "o" spelling; do not use "adviser."

African American

Do not hyphenate.

Follow preferences of the people using the term; *Black* is also acceptable, but the terms are not necessarily interchangeable. (For

example, people from Caribbean nations generally refer to themselves as Caribbean American.)

See also **racial, ethnic identities** in this guide and **nationalities and races** in AP Stylebook for additional guidance.

alumni

Alumni should generally be listed with their years of graduation only when their alumni status is relevant to the story. For example, an alumna who is now an MIT professor would not need to have her graduation year(s) listed in a piece about her new research.

MIT degrees are generally listed as follows:

Undergraduate: *Walter Frey '56*

Graduate: *Martin Tang SM '72*

Undergrad and grad: *Rebecca Greenspun '82, SM '93, PhD '99*

Use the major only if necessary or relevant in the story, and do not capitalize the major unless the full department is mentioned. *Joe Jones '79, SM '81 has been named the new associate dean of the School of Architecture. Sue Lin '09 is a graduate of the Department of Chemistry.*

If an alum earned more than one of the same degree in the same year (i.e. two SBs or two SMs), list the accomplishment only once. If the same degree is earned in different years, both degrees are listed. If two different degrees are earned in the same year, both degrees are listed. Examples:

Timothy Beaver '00, SM '01 (earned 2 of the same grad degrees in '01)

Timothy Beaver SM '01, SM '02 (2 of same degree in different years)

Timothy Beaver SM '93, MBA '93 (2 different degrees in the same year)

Note that “SB” and “SM” are flipped to “BS” and “MS” in common parlance (as opposed to listing grad years after a name). *Ortiz earned an MS in chemistry at Brown before joining the MIT faculty in 2015. Timothy Beaver SM '93 is our mascot.*

A female graduate is an *alumna* and female grads together are *alumnae*. A male graduate is an *alumnus*, and male graduates are *alumni*. Collectively of all genders: *alumni*.

It is acceptable to include both “alumna/alumnus” as an identifier and the graduation year(s) when introducing an alum. *MIT received an unprecedented gift from alumnus Samuel Tak Lee '62, SM '64.*

Use two digits for alumni who graduated within the previous 100

years, to avoid confusion with current years. So, if the story is written in 2015, graduates from 1916 and later would get two digits. For earlier/older alumni, use either Name YRTK or Name, Class of YRTK. *A fourth-generation MIT graduate, Jane Doe '01 followed her father, John Doe III '63, grandfather, John Doe II '30, and great-grandfather, John Doe, Class of 1899, in becoming an engineer.*

See also **departments, majors; academic degrees;** and **apostrophes.**

American Indian

Both “American Indian” and “Native American” are acceptable for those in the U.S., but follow the person’s preference. Whenever possible, it is preferable to be precise about a tribe. *He is a Navajo leader.*

See also **racial, ethnic identities** in this guide and **Indians** in AP Stylebook.

ampersands

Avoid using; use “and.” Two exceptions: “Q&A” and “R&D” are OK.

antisemitism

Don’t use “anti-Semitism.”

apostrophes

Be sure to use a “backwards” apostrophe before a decade or a graduation year. *Jane Jackson '83 was born in the '60s.*

B.C.E. / C.E.

In a break from AP, use “B.C.E.” (before the common era) and “C.E.” (common era) rather than “B.C.” (“before Christ”) and A.D. (“anno Domini”) when referring to early times.

big data

Lowercase unless it’s involved in a title.

bio-inspired

Use to refer to technologies or designs created as inspired by living organisms.

Black

Capitalize when referring to race.

See also **racial, ethnic identities.**

boot camp

Two words, unless it’s used as a proper noun.

brackets

When inserting an explanatory clause into a direct quote, use square brackets. *Dean Smith said, “This new [writing] program will boost literacy.”*

capitalization of common nouns

Common nouns should always take lower case, even when referencing a proper noun, with the exception of “Institute” for MIT, “Corporation” for the MIT Corporation, and “Commencement” for MIT’s Commencement ceremonies. This includes “school” and “college” when referring to MIT’s five schools and one college, without the full spelling of the school/college name. *Several Lincoln Laboratory researchers won a big award; they represented the lab at an annual awards gala. MIT is like a small city; the Institute is home to some 30,000 community members. The School of Science hosted a special event on Friday; 10 faculty members from the school were on hand.*

See also **school, Corporation (MIT), Commencement, Institute, laboratory, MIT Schwarzman College of Computing.**

captions

Physical positions of people in photos are in parentheses unless starting the caption. If there are only two people in the photo, only one directional is needed. *Joe Smith (left) and Jane Doe. Seen here (l-r): Sanchez, Kim, Jackson, Davi. Left to right: Sanchez, Kim, Jackson, Davi*

In general, do not add a period to the end of a caption if it is not a complete sentence. An exception may be made if a clause is followed by a second standalone sentence, but it is preferable in this case to rewrite the caption so that all sentences are complete (with a verb).

See **photo credits** for styling on credits.

centuries

Use numerals above ninth, and don’t use superscript. *The second century AD; the 18th century.*

Hyphenate when part of a compound adjective that precedes a noun. *19th-century literature.*

chair

The preferred term is “chair” over “chairman” or “chairwoman.” Do not use “chairperson.”

For academic chairs, see **professorships.**

Chinese New Year

See **Lunar New Year.**

chemical formulas

Spell out the names of molecules whenever possible. Second and additional references may use an abbreviated form, so long as the short form is defined in parentheses first. *The process calls for an infusion of manganese dioxide (MnO₂). Researchers acquire MnO₂ through a complicated procedure.*

	See also subscript/superscript .
class designations	See students .
college	See MIT Schwarzman College of Computing .
commas in lists	For simple lists, use commas between all items. This is a break from AP style, which does not use the final (a.k.a. serial) comma. <i>She likes apples, bananas, oranges, and pears.</i> This does not apply in certain cases where a department or program's name does not include a comma before the last item. <i>She is a professor in the Department of Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences.</i> (See also departments.) Use semicolons between items that have commas within them: <i>Lin, who is a carpenter; Maria, who is a plumber; and Bill, the chief bottle-washer.</i> See comma in AP Stylebook for further guidance.
Commencement	Capitalize, even when used without "MIT," as long as you are referring to MIT's Commencement ceremonies in June. <i>She was ready for Commencement.</i> See also capitalization of common nouns.
compound modifiers	See hyphens .
countries	Rather than stating the total number of countries in the world, it's preferable to round, unless you use specific language. As of March 2015, the U.S. State Dept. lists 195 "independent states," so you may say that if you are explicit. To describe the reach of MIT programs or people, "over/more than 190" is preferred just in case anyone takes issue with what is credited as a country, etc. <i>Courses on edX reach citizens of more than 190 countries around the world.</i>
company names	For companies that stylize their name using capital letters: Capitalize only the first letter followed by lower case. Exception: when the letters serve as an acronym. <i>We shopped for Lego sets and Ikea furniture. The IBM researcher purchased a new BMW.</i>
corporate suffixes	Always abbreviate Co., Corp., and Inc. at the end of a business name but spell out otherwise. <i>General Electric Co., Gulf Oil Corp., Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Martha Graham Dance Company.</i>

Corporation (MIT)	MIT's board of trustees is always spelled out and capitalized. <i>She was a longtime member of the MIT Corporation.</i>
	See also capitalization of common nouns .
courses (classes)	Use the numerical designation, followed by the title in parentheses in initial caps: <i>He did well in 6.003 (Signals and Systems).</i>
courses (departments)	Use the Arabic numeral, not the Roman, to refer to traditional MIT departments/courses of study, and always capitalize "Course." If standing alone, it is preferable to explain the department in conjunction with the number. When doing so, don't capitalize the department unless the full department name is written out. <i>She wanted to major in biological engineering — Course 20. He fostered a new community in Course 20 (biological engineering). She chose Course 20, and made a splash at the Department of Biological Engineering.</i>
	See departments for a list of course numbers.
courtesy titles	Use formal, capitalized title such as "Professor" only on first reference immediately before the person's name. Capitalize formal titles only if they come immediately before a person's name — not if they include modifiers, such as "of [discipline]." This excludes endowed titles, which should always be capitalized, and specific deanships. Always lowercase "professor of the practice." <i>He greeted Associate Professor Brad Skow with a smile. She had asked the late Institute Professor Mildred Dresselhaus a funny question. He wondered whether professor of the practice Abigail Adams would agree to be on the committee. The new website honors Professor Emeritus Noam Chomsky. The research was conducted by professor of mechanical engineering Greg Liu and professor emerita of chemical engineering Jill Furlow. "It was wonderful," added John F. Kennedy Professor of Political Science Jackson Brown. "Welcome to MIT!" exclaimed Dean of Admissions Jane Doe.</i> It is optimal to mention the person's department or other entity in the same introductory statement. Be sure to list the person's primary affiliation(s) as close to introduction as possible. <i>Professor Alex Shalek of the Department of Chemistry has won a 2015 Searle Scholars Award.</i> Do not use "Dr." except in a direct quote. If it is important to identify the person as a medical doctor, spell that out with whatever terminology is most appropriate. Do not identify the holder of a doctorate degree as "doctor" unless they are also a medical doctor. <i>Physician Jose Rodriguez met with Janet Lin, a Boston-based pathologist.</i>

Don't use "Mr." or "Ms." except within a direct quote or when needed to distinguish two people with the same last name.

Lower case "professors" when using before multiple names. *He was pleased to learn that professors Gleason and Jacks would be teaching the class.*

See also **professorships** and **departments**.

Covid-19

Only capitalize the first letter when referring to the disease. When describing the virus, use "SARS-CoV-2."

credits

See **image credits**.

CRISPR

When including enzyme names as part of a CRISPR system, the enzyme should be set off with a hyphen, not a slash.

Feng Zhang worked on the CRISPR-Cas9 system.

dashes

When using an em dash, include a space on either side of the dash. *She told the professor — an expert on solar energy.*

In a break from AP, do not use dashes in unordered lists. Use bullet points instead.

Also in a break from AP, use an en dash (not an em dash) with no space before the speaker to attribute a callout quotation. *"Go Engineers!" –Tim the Beaver*

See **dash** in AP Stylebook for further guidance.

dates

Abbreviate the month when the exact date is given, but not when the month stands alone or with a year but no date. March, April, May, June, and July are never abbreviated. *He will be here at 2 p.m. Monday, Sept. 12. January 1942 was a cold month. It was the biggest February snowstorm on record.*

Use a comma after the year in a full date that includes the year. *Feb. 14, 1989, was the target date.*

Use a hyphen for a range of dates or times. *The conference will be held June 7-10.*

Only include the year if it is not the current year.

See also **time of day**.

datelines Only use datelines in press releases. The correct form for a dateline is: CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — After the location is a dash, with a space on either side of it.

See also **dashes**.

degrees (academic) See **alumni**.

degrees (temperature) See **temperature**.

departments Capitalize when using the full name, but not when using the short version omitting the word “department.” When referring to multiple departments at once, “departments” should be lower case. You may refer to only one part of a department/section/program if a student is majoring in just that area, but when referring to the full program, use the full name. For sections of SHASS, appending “MIT” to the beginning is OK if you don’t want to use the word “Section.” *Professor Juana Smith of MIT Anthropology; Professor Juana Smith of the Anthropology Section; Professor Jane Smith of the Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics; Professor Jane Smith of aeronautics and astronautics; Professor Joe Smith of the departments of Nuclear Science and Engineering and Aeronautics and Astronautics. Berger is majoring in electrical engineering within the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science.*

List of official department titles (plus course numbers and/or acceptable acronyms on second reference):

School of Architecture and Planning (SA+P)

Department of Architecture (Course 4)

Department of Urban Studies and Planning (Course 11, DUSP)

Program in Media Arts and Sciences (MAS)

Program in Art, Culture, and Technology (ACT)

School of Engineering (SoE)

Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics (Course 16, AeroAstro)

Department of Biological Engineering (Course 20)

Department of Chemical Engineering (Course 10, ChemE)

Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering (Course 1, CEE)

Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science
(Course 6, EECS)

Department of Materials Science and Engineering (Course 3, DMSE)

Department of Mechanical Engineering (Course 2, MechE)

Department of Nuclear Science and Engineering (Course 22, NSE)

[Defunct] Department of Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering /

Department of Ocean Engineering (Course 13 – merged with 1)
[Defunct] Engineering Systems Division (ESD)

School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (SHASS)

Anthropology Section or MIT Anthropology (Course 21A)
MIT Comparative Media Studies/Writing (Course CMS/Course 21W)
Department of Economics (Course 14)
Global Languages Section or MIT Global Languages (Course 21G)
History Section or MIT History (Course 21H)
Department of Linguistics and Philosophy; can be separated as
MIT Linguistics and MIT Philosophy (Course 24)
Literature Section or MIT Literature (Course 21L)
Music and Theater Arts Section; can be separated as MIT Music
and MIT Theater Arts (Course 21M)
Department of Political Science (Course 17)
Security Studies Program (SSP)
Program on Science, Technology, and Society (Course STS)
Program in Women's and Gender Studies (Course WGS)
Doctoral Program in History, Anthropology, and Science, Technology,
and Society (HASTS)
Graduate Program in Science Writing (GPSW)

MIT Sloan School of Management (MIT Sloan)

MIT Sloan School of Management (Course 15)

School of Science

Department of Biology (Course 7)
Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences (Course 9, BCS)
Department of Chemistry (Course 5)
Department of Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences
(Course 12, EAPS)
Department of Mathematics (Course 18)
Department of Physics (Course 8)
[Defunct] Department of Meteorology (Course 19 – merged with 12)

Other (not an exhaustive list of programs/institutes)

Harvard-MIT Program in Health Sciences and Technology (HST)
MIT-WHOI Joint Program in Oceanography and Applied Ocean Science
and Engineering
Institute of Data, Systems, and Society (IDSS)
Institute of Medical Engineering and Science (IMES)

Also see **courtesy titles, professorships, majors, and alumni.**

disabilities

When writing about disabilities, avoid language that implies disabilities are inherently negative and something to be overcome rather than a normal part of human (and campus) diversity. It's best to write about individuals not as being imposed upon by disabilities but rather by an environment filled with physical, attitudinal, communication, and social barriers. Optimal framing acknowledges that barriers or obstacles are not inherent to disabled individuals, but rather, are societal and systemic in nature. Care should be taken to not imply that disabilities or disabled people need/want to be fixed. It is also best not to romanticize the successes of individuals with disability by focusing on their tenacity in overcoming difficulties, especially without acknowledging the systemic obstacles and barriers to accessibility that may remain. Finally, it can be helpful to re-read what you've written while mentally substituting another marginalized group; if it's not a phrase or description you would use to describe members of another marginalized group, don't use it to describe individuals with disabilities.

With specific regard to the term "Deaf," which is capitalized by some in reference to a cultural identity: Generally, we will use "Deaf" to refer to Deaf culture, history, and identity, and "deaf" to refer to a person's audiological status. This will often mean that "deaf" should be used, but "Deaf" can also be used if that is an individual's preference.

A number of online resources provide additional suggestions, as well as specific examples of words or phrases that may be more appropriate to use in place of more problematic ones. These include writing guides from the [Americans with Disabilities Act National Network](#) and the [United Nations](#).

early/regular action

Employ lowercase unless used as a proper noun. *MIT's early-action applications are due Jan. 1. MIT Early Action isn't binding.*

edX

Always use "edX" unless it's the start of a sentence, in which case it would be "EdX." No italics.

ellipses

Treat as a separate word, with no spaces in between the periods but a space on either side. *He ... tried to do what was best.*

See **ellipsis** AP Stylebook for further guidance.

email

No hyphen. For other "e-" terms, use a hyphen. *He used an email address to sign up for e-book, e-business, and e-commerce notifications.*

emeritus

See **professorships**.

fellow, fellows	Lowercase in all instances except for those in a title situation. <i>Fulbright Fellow John Sotherby is 21. Dresselhaus was a fellow in 1951.</i>
fractions	Spell out if it's a relatively simple fraction; otherwise, use a slash. <i>The cup was four-fifths full. It was 1/125 as much as it had been.</i>
gray	Use the "a" spelling, not "grey."
head	Never capitalize when talking about the head or associate/assistant head of a department.
headings	The first letter of a subhed should be capitalized, but otherwise, it should be lower case (unless the heading is a title or similar). Headings should not be listed in title case.
hyphens	The AP Stylebook says (under hyphens), "the fewer hyphens the better; use them only when not using them causes confusion." Hyphenate two words that are combined immediately before a noun to modify that noun, but not after the noun. AP says: "Use hyphens to link all the words in the compound except the adverb very and all adverbs that end in -ly." <i>It was front-page news; it appeared on the front page.</i> The following should remain hyphen-free when used as compound modifiers: real estate public health health care blood pressure elementary school high school middle school credit card computer vision stem cell performing arts data science [Any disease name such as Down syndrome] See also metric system, CRISPR, and 3D, 2D.
hyperlinks	Set target to "_blank" unless it leads to another MIT News story.

image credits

For individual artists, photographers, and freelancers

Image: Bryce Vickmark

For MIT employees

Image: Denis Paiste/Materials Processing Center

For mashups in which MIT staff significantly alter or repurpose original works

Image: Christine Daniloff/MIT and the researchers

Image: Jose-Luis Olivares/MIT and NASA

Image: David Orenstein/Picower Institute with figures from iStock

For images created with the assistance of a generative AI program (see [guidelines](#) on inclusion of genAI images)

Image courtesy of the researchers, using the Midjourney AI image generator

For when permission is given but names are either not provided or not required

Image courtesy of the researchers

For CC-licensed works that include the “share alike” option

Photo: Girona7/Wikimedia Commons CC-BY-SA

For CC-licensed works under CC-BY, CC-BY-NC, or CC-BY-ND

Photo: Feliciano99/Flickr

Indigenous

Capitalize when referring to the original inhabitants of a place.

See also **racial, ethnic identities**.

initials

Avoid using middle initials anywhere but on first mention in the body copy. Unless there is a specific request, all other full-name mentions should be first-name, last-name only. Avoid using middle initials in headlines, deks, captions, related links, etc.

InterFraternity Council

Capitalize the “F.”

internet

Do not capitalize.

Institute

Used by itself, it’s always capitalized when referring to MIT. Lowercase when referring to anything else.

See also **capitalization of common nouns**.

italics	In general, do not use italics. Five exceptions: Journals and magazines should be italicized, as should scientific names (including genus, subgenus, species, subspecies, and variety), court cases, and <i>MITx</i>. If you need to begin an article with some separate introductory text, that can be italicized, as can bumper text noting, for example, that the piece was previously posted elsewhere, etc. <i>She published a fascinating article on the giant anteater Myrmecophaga tridactyla in Nature Communications last month.</i> Punctuation at the end of an italicized item should retain the italics. See also titles.
Jr., III, IV, etc.	Don't use a comma after the name. <i>Jerome Connor Jr. Adam Powell IV.</i>
kelvin	See temperature.
KSJ at MIT	The Knight Science Journalism Program at MIT can be abbreviated KSJ at MIT.
laboratory	Spell out and capitalize on first reference when it's part of a formal lab name (see exceptions below). Informal subsequent mentions should be lowercase. <i>Daniela Rus is head of the MIT Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory. She has worked at the laboratory since 2008 and is one of the lab's most prolific researchers.</i> The following labs have a formal name of "Lab" and should not use "Laboratory" on first mention: MIT Media Lab MIT D-Lab Samuel Tak Lee MIT Real Estate Entrepreneurship Lab Entrepreneurship Lab (part of MIT Sloan) Global Entrepreneurship Lab (part of MIT Sloan) See also capitalization of common nouns.
Latino/a/x	Go with the person's preference, but when none is given, use this, not "Latin American," for a person from — or whose ancestors are from — a Spanish-speaking land or culture, especially Latin America. Use "Latinx" as a gender-neutral/nonbinary term. See also racial, ethnic identities.
like, such as	Use "like" to compare nouns and pronouns. Use "such as" when giving examples. <i>He eats like a pro. She enjoys foods such as cheese and pie.</i>

-like	No hyphen when using “like” as a suffix, unless the letter “l” would be tripled or the main element is a proper noun. One common exception: <i>flu-like. The building was mall-like, MIT-like, and igloolike.</i>
links	See hyperlinks .
Lunar New Year	Unless discussing a specific individual cultural tradition associated with a certain country, please use Lunar New Year, the more inclusive term for this holiday, which is celebrated by numerous cultures and nations.
majors	Do not capitalize. Also, note that there may be many programs of study within an individual department or section. When referring to a major, feel free to be more specific about the area of focus if desired, rather than spelling out the full area of study as reflected by the department/program name — though the appropriate department/section listing should be used in all metadata (related links, etc.). However, all mentions of the department proper should take the full capitalized name. <i>She is majoring in electrical engineering. He is minoring in science writing. They are a junior in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning.</i> See also students.
manned / unmanned	Do not use these terms; replace with gender-neutral language. <i>The unpiloted aerial vehicle reached its target altitude. MIT researchers are testing new remotely piloted aircraft. TESS is a robotic spacecraft from MIT and NASA. This will be the first crewed mission to the moon since the 1970s.</i>
mens et manus	Do not capitalize, and be sure to put into quotations. Hyphenate if used as a modifier. <i>MIT’s motto is “mens et manus.” The course exemplified the Institute’s “mens-et-manus” spirit.</i> If using the MIT motto, spell out the English translation where possible. When so doing, set both the Latin and the English in quotation marks. <i>MIT’s motto is “mens et manus,” or “mind and hand.”</i>
metric system	Generally, only use metric terms in situations where they are universally accepted forms of measurement, where the metric measurement is a significant round number, or where the measurements in a research work are presented in metric. Try to be consistent with metric usage within any one article. <i>She used 16 mm film. He vowed to walk 100 kilometers every week.</i>

The following prefixes can be used, with no hyphen, to denote fractional elements or large multiples: *pico, nano, micro, milli, centi, deci, deka, hector, kilo, mega, giga, tera*.

See also **nano** and **hyphens**.

MIT.nano

Use this stylized form when possible. In metadata, where the period might be misinterpreted, include alternate forms such as “MIT Nano.”

**MIT Schwarzman
College of Computing**

First reference should always be the fully spelled-out “MIT Stephen A. Schwarzman College of Computing.” On subsequent references, it’s “MIT Schwarzman College of Computing” or the acronym “SCC,” never just “College of Computing.” You may, however, reference “the college” by itself; do not capitalize in this case.

See also **capitalization of common nouns**.

MITx

Always italicize, with “MIT” capitalized and “x” lowercase.

See also **italics**.

moon

Never capitalized. *The moon is our natural satellite. There are more than 60 moons in the Saturnian system.*

Lowercase adjectives derived from the moon. *It reached lunar orbit.*

See also **planetary/celestial objects**.

names

Always refer to a person with his/her last name, except on first mention or in the event the first name is within a quote.

For individuals with nicknames, use quotation marks rather than parentheses to denote the nickname. *Institute Professor Sallie “Penny” Chisholm has written several children’s books.*

See also **courtesy titles** and **professorships**.

nano

No hyphens when using words with this prefix. *They specialize in nanotechnologies, nanochips, nanodevices, and other nanoscale items.*

See also **metric system** and **MIT.nano**.

Native American

See **American Indian**.

NGO

See **non-governmental organization, acronyms**.

Nobel Prize	Capitalize the full name of the prize, but lowercase the category when speaking generically. Lowercase “laureate” in reference to a winner. The full name of the economics prize (Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel) should be spelled out high up in an article but can be written in shorthand in heds, deks, and subsequent mentions. Do not capitalize as “Nobel Prize in Economics.” <i>He won the 2019 Nobel Prize in Chemistry. She is the first woman in 50 years to win a Nobel in physics. He received the Nobel Prize in economics for his influential research. She is a recent Nobel laureate.</i>
non-governmental organization	Spell out “non-governmental organization” on first mention. Subsequent mentions can use the acronym. See also acronyms.
numerals	See numerals in AP Stylebook for detailed guidance; in general, spell out anything under 10. Exceptions include: ages, tabular matter or data, and anything expressing a quantity using a unit of measure. <i>He was 2 years old. The widget cost 5 cents. It contained a 3-kilowatt generator. The cluster contained 6 billion stars. They had three sons. It was a 3.5 magnitude earthquake.</i>
online	Always one word; no space or hyphen.
OpenCourseWare	One word with capitals.
ordinals	Spell out first through ninth; otherwise, use numerals and letters: <i>The 10th anniversary. 21st-century writing skills.</i>
organization names	Keep organizations’ generic names in lower case when shortened for second references. <i>The ROTC Task Force convened; members of the task force agreed.</i>
over, more than	“Over” is acceptable for describing discrete objects; “more than” can also be used. <i>Over 3,000 people attended the lecture.</i>
party affiliations	Include a politician’s name and home state only if necessary for clarity. Abbreviate the state and set off in commas, not parentheses. <i>Senator Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., said . . .</i>
percent / %	In general, use % when describing specific data. “Percent” should be used in casual situations. Use numerals, even if the numeral is less

than 10. *Growth has averaged 8 % annually since 1999. There is only a small percent chance of that happening.*

When scaling down, use fractions, not “x percent smaller” or “x percent less.” *It was half as big as the previous year’s total. The membrane is one-tenth the size of traditional models.*

phone numbers

For all numbers, use dashes, not parentheses. *617-555-1234*

photo credits

See **image credits**.

planets/celestial objects

There are eight planets and at least five dwarf planets in our solar system. Do not refer to Pluto as a planet unless explaining its historical categorization.

Capitalize the name of our planet but not the synonym for dirt/the ground. *The extraordinary citizens of planet Earth. The Earth is round. She is down-to-earth. The machine tilled the earth.*

Capitalize the planets and any adjectives derived from them. *Martian, Jovian, Saturnian*

Lowercase “moon” and “sun” and any adjectives derived from them. *lunar, solar*

“Planetary disk” is spelled with a “k,” not a “c.”

police ranks

Use the abbreviations “Sgt.” and “Lt.” before a person’s name but always spell out “Officer.”

postdoc, postdoctoral

One word, no space.

Always use “postdoc” instead of “postdoctoral fellow,” unless it is part of a formal name or used in a direct quote. *She is a Pappalardo Postdoctoral Fellow. He was a postdoc in Gleason’s lab.*

prefixes

In general, nix the hyphen.

“Co-” receives a hyphen if it is making a noun that is related to a profession. *Co-author, co-pilot.* (See **co-** in AP Stylebook for more.)

For further details, see AP Stylebook under **prefixes** and specific cases such as **anti-**, **pre-**, **post-**, **pro-**.

principal investigator

Should not be capitalized. The abbreviation “PI” may be used without explanation on second/subsequent mentions. *Principal investigator*

Sangeeta Bhatia is a multi-tasker. As a PI, she's responsible for grant proposals, teaching, mentoring, and hiring and overseeing postdocs.

See also **acronyms**.

professorships

Give the full name of an endowed professorship, preceded by “the,” on first reference when a faculty member holds a named chair.

Exception: “the” isn’t always needed if it precedes the person’s name.

Ali S. Argon, the Quentin Berg Professor of Mechanical Engineering met with Class of 1922 Career Development Professor Azra Aksamija.

The terms “professor of the practice,” and “adjunct professor” should always be lower case. *The award went to professor of the practice Sheila Kennedy.*

Both “emeritus professor” and “professor emeritus” are acceptable; use “emerita” for female professors. Capitalize when used immediately before the person’s name. *EAPS received \$5 million from Emeritus Professor Peter H. Stone and Professor Paola Malanotte Stone. Jackson is a professor emerita of literature.*

See also **courtesy titles** and **departments**.

pronouns

Use pronouns as requested by the subject. They/their may be used in singular when cisgender pronouns are not applicable/desired. *Ruiz was a graduate student at Cornell; they majored in chemistry.*

pronunciations

Should be given in quotations. If emphasis is included, use capital letters. *He was a co-founder of madri+d (pronounced “madri-mas-DEH”).*

quotes

Always use double quotation marks, unless the item to be quoted is nested inside another quote. This goes for heds, deks, subheds, etc., as well as for body copy. *“The demo was a great success,” she said. “It was a ‘mens-et-manus’ moment.”*

See also **“mens et manus”**.

racial, ethnic identities

Capitalize terms such as “Black” and “Indigenous” when used to collectively describe a culture, community, or group of people. In general, be as specific and inclusive as possible when referring to racial and ethnic identity. When in doubt, go with the person’s preference.

See also **Black, Indigenous, white, African American, American Indian, Latino/a/x** in this guide. You may also reference **racial and**

ethnic identity in the American Psychological Association Stylebook for additional guidance.

rare-earth metal

The series is listed as “rare earth” on periodic tables, but do hyphenate as a modifier. *The process combined rare-earth metals.*

See also **hyphens**.

said, says

In most stories, use the construction “says.” “Said” should only be used in event stories, in which there is a specific time element in the piece. When used in a long quotation, put “says” after the speaker’s name, unless you are giving a secondary attribution. *“This discovery will change the world,” Thomson says. “It’s awesome.” “This discovery will change the world,” says Thomson, the Toshiba Professor of Television. “It’s awesome.”*

scaling

When scaling down, use fractions, not “x percent smaller” or “x percent less.” *It was half as big as the previous year’s total. They achieved one-twentieth the rate.*

See also **percent**.

school

Only capitalize if it is an official title; if it’s MIT you don’t need to use “MIT” in order to capitalize. *He teaches in the School of Science; he is one of the longest-serving professors in the school. She came to MIT after serving as a professor at the Stanford University School of Engineering. While there, she was dean of the school of engineering.*

See also **capitalization of common nouns**.

scientific names

In a break from AP, italicize scientific names (genus, subgenus, species, subspecies, and variety). *She published an article on Myrmecophaga tridactyla. Myrmecophaga is a lonely genus, with only one representing species. He found a nest of Maiasaura fossils.*

On first reference, use full genus name. On subsequent references, use the abbreviated form. *Humans are Homo sapiens. We are H. sapiens.*

Only the genus is capitalized.

sections of SHASS

See **departments**.

serial commas

See **commas in lists**.

ship, spacecraft names

In general, initial caps and no italics. *MIT’s MOXIE instrument will fly on the Mars2020 rover.*

Use the pronoun “it,” not “she.” *MIT’s robot cheetah is newly reconfigured. Watch it run!*

Use Arabic, not Roman, numerals. *Voyager 2 flew by Neptune in 1989.*

Lowercase “space shuttle” alone, but capitalize proper names. *She witnessed two space shuttle launches; both were Space Shuttle Atlantis.*

See also **spacecraft designations**, **space shuttle**, and **boats, ships** in AP Stylebook.

Sloan / MIT Sloan

Refer to the MIT Sloan School of Management or simply MIT Sloan. Do not use “Sloan” only. *He is a professor at the MIT Sloan School of Management. She’s been a lecturer at MIT Sloan for six years.*

species

See **scientific names**.

spinoff, startup

No hyphen.

sports teams

Capitalize only when referring to the official team name. *The Engineers won two games. Women’s Lacrosse took two from Wellesley. Amherst defeats MIT Softball. Oberlin defeats MIT in the first softball game of the season.*

state names

Always spell out names of the 50 U.S. states in body copy. Exceptions: datelines or short-form listings of party affiliation. *Senator Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She is from Oklahoma.*

Abbreviate states in lists, headlines, agate, tabular material, and media credit lines. Abbreviations (postal code):

Ala. (AL)	Ind. (IN)	Mo. (MO)	N.D. (ND)	Va. (VA)
Ariz. (AZ)	Kan. (KS)	Mont. (MT)	Okla. (OK)	Wash. (WA)
Calif. (CA)	Ky. (KY)	Neb. (NE)	Ore. (OR)	W.Va. (WV)
Colo. (CO)	La. (LA)	Nev. (NV)	Pa. (PA)	Wis. (WI)
Conn. (CT)	Md. (MD)	N.H. (NH)	R.I. (RI)	Wyo. (WY)
Del. (DE)	Mass. (MA)	N.J. (NJ)	S.C. (SC)	
Fla. (FL)	Mich. (MI)	N.M. (NM)	S.D. (SD)	
Ga. (GA)	Minn. (MN)	N.Y. (NY)	Tenn. (TN)	
Ill. (IL)	Miss. (MS)	N.C. (NC)	Vt. (VT)	

The following states are never abbreviated, either in text or datelines: Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas, Utah.

The following states should be abbreviated without periods if used in a headline: NY, NJ, NH, NM, NC, SC, ND, SD, and RI.

See also **party affiliations** in this guide and **state names** in AP Stylebook.

students

Current undergraduates do not receive an expected completion year after their name; their class designation should be spelled out as first-year, second-year, junior, or senior. For majors/minors, do not use course numbers; instead, spell out the department (but only capitalize when using the formal department name). *Maria Ruiz is a junior in mechanical engineering. Jack Lin, a sophomore in the Department of Physics, won the contest with political science major Edgar Patel.*

Do not use “freshman/men,” “underclassman/men,” or “upperclassman/men.” The term “first year” should be used instead. If referring to a mixed group of class years (not including first-years), “upper-level undergraduates” or “upper-level students” is preferred. Since we are a community of both undergraduates and graduate students, clarifying first-year undergraduates vs. first-year graduate students is vital. When referring to a combination of both groups, “first-year students” is appropriate. *A first-year graduate student in MechE was awarded a major NIH grant as a senior undergraduate.*

Current graduate students should be specified as “grad student,” “PhD student,” “masters’ candidate,” “doctoral candidate,” or similar. Do not use an expected completion year. *David Sengeh is a PhD student at the Media Lab.*

Additional guidelines on [non-gendered class year usage](#) are available from the Office of the Vice Chancellor.

See also **courses (departments)**, **departments**, and **alumni**.

subheds

See **headings**.

subscript/superscript

Use for mathematical and scientific terms where appropriate.

See also **chemical formulas** and **centuries**.

sun

Never capitalized. *The sun is our home star.*

Lowercase adjectives derived from the sun. *He studies the solar wind.*

Technology Review

MIT Technology Review should be fully spelled out in italics on all mentions. Non-English-language editions are appended in Roman

letters after a comma. *A longtime subscriber to MIT Technology Review, he was pleased to learn of the new MIT Technology Review, Spanish edition.*

temperature

Use figures for all temperatures except “zero.”

Either spell out “degrees” or, when abbreviating, simply list the unit of measurement after a space — don’t use a “°”. On first reference, it should be “degrees Fahrenheit” or “degrees Celsius,” followed by “F” or “C,” respectively, on subsequent mentions. *It was 84 degrees Fahrenheit on campus today. Yesterday it was 64 F.*

For the Kelvin scale, there are no “degrees,” only “kelvins.” Abbreviate only with the capital letter K. *The boiling point of water is 273.16 kelvins. The sample reached 40 K before freezing.*

Note that for consecutive temperature mentions, you don’t have to include the unit in the second mention. *Temperatures reached a low of -40 C and a high of zero.*

Use a hyphen to indicate negative numbers (this differs from AP Style). For ranges, use “to” rather than a hyphen to avoid awkward minus-sign constructions. *Temperatures varied from -5 to -25 degrees Fahrenheit.*

Large temperatures in the thousands should have commas; otherwise, use abbreviations. *The surface of the sun measures 5,800 K. It can reach 200 million degrees inside some stars.*

See also **temperatures** in AP Stylebook.

time element

Use days of the week (Monday, Tuesday, etc.) for days within seven days before or after the date of the issue of a story or news release, along with appropriate tense. *The report was issued Tuesday. She’ll be done Thursday.*

Avoid redundancies such as “last” or “next;” if the exact day might not be understood, use the date. *He’ll be done on Sept. 7.*

On news releases, use both day of the week and date at the top.

The word “today” can be used but not “tomorrow” or “yesterday;” give the day of the week or the month and date.

times

Use periods and a space when only the hour is given. Use a colon when minutes are given. *5 a.m., 3:30 p.m.*

Separate hours with “to” when using “from/to” construction or when times span from morning into afternoon hours or vice versa. Otherwise, use a hyphen. The conference will occur Friday from 5 *a.m. to 2 p.m.* Friday. *The meeting lasted from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.* It will take place between 5-7 p.m. on Monday and 5:30-7 p.m. the other days.

titles

Individual creative works including academic papers, books, games, songs, TV shows, movies, plays, music, and artworks should be listed in quotation marks. Journals and magazines are in italics. *Clark Gable starred in “Mutiny on the Bounty.” Zuber published in Icarus last month.*

Capitalize “a” and “the” only if it’s the first word of the title: *She sang “The Star-Spangled Banner.” His work appeared in The New York Times. They read “Lord of the Flies.”*

See also **italics**. For people’s titles, see **courtesy titles** and **departments**.

traveling

One “l,” not two.

university names

Spell out the full name of a university on first mention. Exceptions: “Caltech” should be used instead of the California Institute of Technology; “Georgia Tech” and “Virginia Tech” should be used in place of their full “Institute of Technology” names; and “Cambridge University” and “Oxford University” should be used in place of “University of Cambridge” and “University of Oxford.” *He attended Harvard University as an undergrad prior to his postdoc appointment at MIT. His time at Harvard was eventful. She earned a PhD in planetary science from Caltech.*

Use “at” between the university and the campus. *University of California at Berkeley*

When describing foreign universities, use the English version of the name whenever possible. *University of Paris*, not *Université Paris*.

voice

MIT News articles are written in the third-person voice. We do not accept articles written in first-person voice, unless it’s a “Scene at MIT” where an individual describes an image, all in quotation marks.

voicemail

One word.

web / web-

Lowercase the short form of “World Wide Web” when standing alone or in conjunction with other words. (Note that the web is not the same

as the internet, but is a subset; other applications, such as email, exist on the internet.) *He surfed the web to find a webpage and a webfeed. The webmaster realized that her website, webcam, and webcast were all mysteriously down.*

white

Lowercase “white” to avoid implying a false equivalence between how different members of racial groups experience racism. When possible, use more specific terms to describe a person or group’s race or ethnicity.

See also **racial, ethnic identities**.

Wi-Fi

Capitalized and hyphenated.

web addresses (URLs)

No brackets, and do not use the http:// in front. Always double check to make sure what you typed in links to the right site; small changes including a backslash at the end or substituting “https” for “http” can break the link. Use a period after the web site’s name if it is the end of a sentence.

X-ray

Always capitalized.