

The Huntington News

The News Style Guide

Nobody has more style than The Huntington News. Keep that in mind as you use this style guide as a reference while writing and editing stories. When checking stories for style, the Guide should be your first go-to reference. It is divided into four sections, including words and phrases, general style, sports style and Inside style.

If something is not in the Guide, check the Associated Press Stylebook (there are several copies in the newsroom). If you're 0-for-2, look at how the Boston Globe solves the problem by searching the phrase on Boston.com.

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– Words and phrases –

according to vs. said – A person said. According to a press release. We NEVER say according to a person – people talk. Example: “Ed Klotzbier said,” but it would be, “According to the report...”

Addresses - Use the abbreviations Ave., Blvd., St., Dr., etc. only with numbered addresses. This is especially important with Crime Log. Example: 104 Hemenway St. vs. “I live on Hemenway Street.” When referring to two or more streets, it is Hemenway and Gainsborough streets with a lowercase “streets”. Always use numbers in figure form with addresses.

afterward – It is never plural. That goes for all the –ward words, including toward. Making them plural is a European thing that has slowly slipped into our way of speaking and writing but it is incorrect and not AP Style.

all together – never one word

allegedly – This is a key word. It is not acceptable to write: “Peter Lopez robbed a bank and gunned down three people,” until he is convicted. For an arrest report: “Peter Lopez allegedly robbed a bank and gunned down three people.” Also acceptable: “Police said they suspect Peter Lopez of robbing a bank and gunning down three people.” The key here is that the police can say it, but you can't. It has to be attributed to someone. A libel suit would shut us down. Make sure you have the name, age and city correct.

alumni – Alumni is plural. An alumnus is a male and an alumna is a female. Alumni is also used for a group of men and women who attended a school. DO NOT USE ALUM except in a headline.

Behrakis

chair – Acceptable on all reference to someone who heads a committee. Only capitalize if it is before the name. Example: Robert Lowdnes, chair of the Faculty Senate Agenda committee. But Chairman Robert Lowdnes.

cell phone – two words

classes and majors – Do not capitalize unless it is a language. Example: She is a Spanish major but he is an economics major.

college – Capitalize when referring to a specific Northeastern college. Example: The College of Arts and Sciences, Boston College, but not he attends college. Also, on first reference, all college names must be spelt out (i.e. Berklee College of Music, not just Berklee). The only exception is in Sports.

Colonial Athletic Association – must write out on first reference, but can be CAA on all succeeding references.

communication studies – This is how the major is written EVERY time. It is not communications.

co-op – Acceptable in all references to a student's cooperative education job. When referring to the actual department however, on first reference, it is the Department of Cooperative Education or the cooperative education department, only use co-op department on the second reference. Never write coop. We aren't chickens.

Council for University Programs - (not Programming). Write out first time. Acronym is acceptable on second reference.

Dates – If it is a specific date, abbreviate the month; i.e. Aug. 22, 1954 (check the AP book for abbreviations). If the month is standing alone, write it out; i.e. He was born in August. Do not write on before a day or date unless at the beginning of a sentence or if it is necessary. Example: They met Tuesday night NOT They met on Tuesday night.

Deaf – It is capitalized when referring to an individual or group.

dorm – see “residence hall”

e-mail – no caps, with a hyphen

fraternity or fraternities – Not frat or frats ever in a story, allowed in headlines. First reference all caps. Example: Phi Kappa Tau, second reference use initials.

Gainsborough Street

Hemenway Street

hip-hop – not hip hop, HipHop, Hip-Hop. We've seen them all but hip hop is the only proper one.

Internet – We capitalize it.

Last names – after a person is introduced, all succeeding references to the person are by last name only.

like vs. such as – We use like, ALWAYS. It is a shorter form of such as and they mean the same thing. The newspaper business is all about short words and saving space.

majors – see “classes” entry

many – We never say many. Find another way to say it or use some instead.

Matthews Arena– There is no apostrophe.

Middle initials – News style is that no one has a middle initial when being named unless it is to clarify between two people with the same name as in the two president Bushes'.

myNEU – When talking about the school's Internet provider, we refer to it as the myNEU portal.

NCAA – This can always stand alone. Never needs to be written out.

nonprofit – one word, lowercase

Northeastern – Unless said in a quote, Northeastern stands alone. You do not need to write Northeastern University.

Northeastern University Division of Public Safety – always written out on first reference. Its acronym is NUPD and is acceptable on all other references.

NUSTAND – This is not an acronym. Instead we write a short clause, like “Northeastern's genocide awareness group” or something similar to explain what they do.

Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution – Write out on first references. OSCCR is acceptable in all following references. While on the subject, it is always REPORTED to OSCCR, not referred. Watch for this especially in Crime Log.

over – NEVER NEVER EVER over unless talking about actual space. Example: The airplane flew over the crowd (over is OK in this instance because it is actual space). Instead use more than, during and other such words to replace over. Example: Sue made more than \$600 this weekend. Drew went to New York during the weekend.

Parsons Field – There is no apostrophe.

president – When discussing our university's president here is the deal. On first reference his name is written out (ex: President Joseph Aoun), on second reference it is President Aoun and in all subsequent references he is his last name only.

reported vs. referred – Bad people are always REPORTED to OSCCR. They are never referred to OSCCR.

residence hall – do not refer to it as a dorm. The Residential Life office will kill you.

Residential Student Association – Write out on first reference, RSA on all succeeding references.

said – It is always “said.” Nobody ever exclaimed, admitted, insisted, mumbled or shrieked. Also, when you're talking to your friends, you would never attribute a phrase by saying, “The band was really good, said Thomas.” You are not Yoda and you would actually say, “The band was really good, Thomas said.” The same goes for News style. The ONLY time that “said” goes before a person's name is when his/her title is included.

for example... “Blah blah blah,” said Mike Armini, university spokesperson.

All other references would be Armini said. Also see the “according to vs. said” entry above, and the “attribution” entry in Other Style below.

September 11 – This is our style, not Sept. 11, 9/11, 911, September 11th, etc. If someone says the number version in a quote, then 9/11 is acceptable.

St. Stephen Street – It is not possessive! This is how the street is spelled. Not St. Stephen's Street or St. Steven Street.

Student Government Association – On first reference write out, SGA on all succeeding references.

TD Banknorth Garden

that – never say that after said and remove all that's when they are not necessary to the sentence, which is most of them. For example “He said that the show was good” is incorrect, and should be written, “He said the show was good.”

theatre – The Northeastern theatre department spells theatre with an –re instead of an –er so we follow their style. Any time theatre is used in a story it is to be written –re UNLESS is the proper name of a theatre and their style is spelled the other way.

the – Never use “this” or “their” when “the” would be sufficient.

their – see “the”

this – see “the”

Times – a.m. and p.m. this is how they are written. Always use noon or midnight not 12 p.m. or 12 a.m.

Titles – Titles are capitalized before names but not after. Example: SGA President Joey Fiore as opposed to Joey Fiore, SGA president.

toward – It is never plural. That goes for all the –ward words, including afterward. Making them plural is a European thing that has slowly slipped into our way of speaking and writing but it is incorrect and not AP style.

The News – When referencing ourselves in stories we are The News with capital T and N. Not the Huntington News, just The News. Also, in the middle of the sentence, “the” is lower-case. For example, I write for the Huntington News. Same thing goes for most other papers (I read the Boston Globe, I read the Boston Herald). But please note, if it’s just “the Globe,” it’s also lower-case (I read the Globe, I read the Herald.)

TV – All capitalized, no periods.

UMass – First reference is University of Massachusetts Boston, second reference is UMass Boston.

United States – Spell out whenever it is used in noun form. Only use US (with no periods) as an adjective. Example: He lives in the United States and is a member of the US armed forces.

university – This is acceptable in all second references to Northeastern University. Do not capitalize when it is standing alone. Capitalize only when referring to a specific university, for example Boston University but if you are saying she took a tour of the university it is lower-case.

up – The word “up” is your enemy. For example, “following up,” “backing up” and “finishing up” are just following, backing and finishing.

URLs – commonly used ones like Amazon.com can stand alone without the www, but lesser known ones may contain the www if it helps clarify the site.

Years – Example: 2008-09 not 2008-2009

– General style –

Acronyms – written in parentheses after entire name is written out on first reference. Example: Student Government Association (SGA) ... Then acronym is used in all succeeding reference.

Adjectives – While these are almost always fun and can add to a story, very, really, truly, etc. are ineffective and almost always unnecessary.

Anonymous sources – We almost never use anonymous sources and before you tell a source you will keep their identity a secret you must check with the editor of the section. But if you receive permission, a sentence must be added when the person is first announced to explain why they asked to remain anonymous.

Attribution – When attributing a quote we always use said. Never write Alex felt, shouted, exclaimed. It is Allen said.

Cliches – Avoid them like the plague or else it will be the death of you.

Colons – We put two spaces after these, unless in a headline. Example: She went to the store to buy a few things: (two spaces) eggs, milk, cheese, cereal.

Commas – Commas come after prepositions, when there is a natural pause and in lists. The News’ style is to not put a comma before and, or or but in lists.

Contractions – Don’t use them unless they are in a quote.

Ellipses – Always put a space on either side. Example: "This is the worst pain I have ever felt, and I have no one who understands me. ... I don't even know what to do with these intense emotions," Piccolo said.

Exclamation points – Unless you are directly quoting an e-mail or written document with an exclamation point, don’t add it in a quote – it is editorializing. Also, don’t add it to your story for flair or pizzazz, they will be cut by the copy editors.

Quotes – OUR STYLE is that all quotes STAND ALONE. Example:

The News recently celebrated the move to an independent newspaper.

“We are so excited,” Editor in Chief Kate Augusto said.

They plan to throw a party once they settle into their new place, she said.

Another gripe about quotes, all punctuation goes inside the quotation marks.

Quotes said after a meeting, speech or presentation must be specified as being said after the meeting, speech or presentation if the source is being quotes in conversation both during and after the meeting. Our style is to say: in an interview with The News.

Slang – Don’t use slang unless it is in a quote. For example, we would never write “gotta” in an article but if someone on the baseball team said, “We gotta start winning games,” it is acceptable. But take this too far. If you are interviewing the provost, even if he said gotta in a quote, write it out. He didn’t mean to talk in slang.

Stacked quotes – We never stack quotes. This means that there must be a transitional sentence between quotes so that there are not two quotes back to back in a story, regardless of whether or not the quotes are from the same person or different people.

– Sports style –

its vs. their – This is important. When using the name of a college (which is singular), use its. When using the name of the team, like the Huskies (which is plural), use their. Even if the team name is something weird like the Harvard Crimson, it is still considered plural.

EXAMPLES: Northeastern won its fourth straight game in a row yesterday. Boston College used its usual style of play to take home the championship. The Huskies are entering their tenth season with head coach Jon Raymond. The Crimson rely on their defense to win games.

Matthews Arena– There is no apostrophe.

Parsons Field – There is no apostrophe.

RBI – Runs batted in is always written as RBI not RBIs. For example, Ashley Traupman hit 17 RBI yesterday.

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their – see “its vs. their”

– Inside style –

album title – We capitalize words as the artist does, but do not put quotation marks around them. Example: Rihanna’s latest CD is called Good Girls Gone Bad and it was released in 2007.

band names – Bands are considered plural, even if the name sounds singular. (For example, The Donnas released their tenth album. Weezer are reinventing their image.) Individual artists are singular. (Kanye West was typing so hard, he almost broke his MacBook Air.)

movie titles – Are in quotations. My friends and I watched “Empire Records” yesterday.

hip-hop – not hip hop, HipHop, Hip-Hop. We’ve seen them all but hip-hop is the only proper one.

theatre – The Northeastern theatre department spells theatre with an –re instead of an –er so we follow their style. Any time theatre is used in a story it is to be written –re UNLESS is the proper name of a theatre and their style is spelled the other way.

TV – All capitalized, no periods.

TV show titles – Are in quotations. My favorite show on TV is “Iron Chef America.”

song titles – Are in quotations. I like the song “Thriller” by Michael Jackson. (But remember, if you like the album, then you like Thriller.)