



*Tips and tools*  
FOR THE WRITING WORLD

# AP Style and Chicago Style: 15 Major Differences

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If you're a copy editor, you likely use AP style for some projects and Chicago for others. Problem is, keeping track of where the two styles diverge can be a challenge. Here's a guide to help you out.

	<i>AP Stylebook</i>	<i>Chicago Manual of Style</i>
<b>Academic Degree Abbreviations</b>	Use periods in <i>B.A.</i> , <i>M.A.</i> , <i>Ph.D.</i> and other similar abbreviations.	Do not use periods in <i>BA</i> , <i>MA</i> , <i>PhD</i> , and other similar abbreviations.
<b>Co- Prefix</b>	Hyphenate words that begin with the co-prefix when indicating occupation or status: <i>co-author</i> , <i>co-worker</i> . Also hyphenate words like <i>co-op</i> and <i>co-opt</i> for clarity. Otherwise, do not hyphenate: <i>coexist</i> , <i>copay</i> .	In general, do not hyphenate words that begin with the co- prefix: <i>coauthor</i> , <i>coexist</i> , <i>copay</i> , <i>coworker</i> . Exceptions: <i>co-op</i> , <i>co-opt</i> .
<b>Colon</b>	Capitalize the first word after a colon if it begins a complete sentence or if it's a proper noun.	In general, lowercase the first word after a colon, even if it begins a complete sentence. Exceptions: capitalize the first word if it's a proper noun or if the colon is introducing a question, quotation, or series of related sentences.
<b>Diacritical Marks</b>	Do not use accent marks or other diacritical marks in common nouns such as <i>café</i> , <i>decor</i> , <i>applique</i> and <i>jalapeno</i> . Do use such marks in names of people who use them ( <i>Beyoncé</i> ) or when quoting someone using a non-English language: <i>The man asked, "Cómo estás?"</i>	Refer to the <i>Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary</i> . When M-W gives two options, it's the author's/editor's choice. For example, <i>café</i> (M-W preferred) or <i>cafe</i> , <i>decor</i> (M-W preferred) or <i>décor</i> , <i>applique</i> (only choice), and <i>jalapeño</i> (M-W preferred) or <i>jalapeno</i> .
<b>Ellipsis</b>	An ellipsis is typed as three periods with a space before ... and a space after. There are no spaces between the periods.	An ellipsis is typed as three spaced periods with a space before . . . and a space after. The three periods must always appear on the same line.
<b>Em Dash</b>	Type a space before and a space after an em dash — like this.	Do not type spaces around an em dash—like this.
<b>En Dash</b>	AP style does not use en dashes. Use hyphens to indicate ranges ( <i>Monday-Friday</i> ), to join multi-word compound modifiers ( <i>Los Angeles-based business</i> ), in sports scores ( <i>21-7</i> ) and in college campus names ( <i>The University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh</i> ).	Use an en dash to indicate ranges ( <i>Monday–Friday</i> ), to join multi-word compound modifiers ( <i>Los Angeles–based business</i> ), in sports scores ( <i>21–7</i> ), and in college campus names ( <i>The University of Wisconsin–Oshkosh</i> ).



	<b>AP Stylebook</b>	<b>Chicago Manual of Style</b>
<b>Numbers</b>	<p>In general, spell numbers one through nine, and use numerals for 10 and above. Spell out a number when it begins a sentence.</p> <p>Exceptions: Always use numerals for ages, dates, measurements and percentages. Use numerals for years, even at the start of a sentence: <i>2020 was an important year</i>. For large numbers (millions and billions), use a combination of digits and words: <i>2 million, 4 billion</i>.</p>	<p>Spell numbers one through one hundred. Spell large round numbers: <i>two hundred, fifty-three thousand, four hundred thousand, fifteen million, twenty-two billion</i>. Use numerals for all other numbers.</p> <p>Exceptions: Use numerals with percentages (<i>4 percent</i>) and exact times (<i>3:25</i>).</p>
<b>Percentages</b>	Use the % symbol: <i>8%</i>	Use the word <i>percent</i> : <i>8 percent</i>
<b>Possessives</b>	When forming a possessive of a singular proper noun ending in <i>s</i> , use an apostrophe only: <i>Dickens' novels, Jesus' life</i> .	When forming a possessive of a singular proper noun ending in <i>s</i> , use an apostrophe followed by an <i>s</i> : <i>Dickens's novels, Jesus's life</i> .
<b>Proper Nouns Beginning With Lowercase Letters</b>	For proper nouns like <i>eBay</i> and <i>iPhone</i> , use lowercase for the first letter, unless it begins a sentence. In that case, use a capital letter: <i>EBay, iPhone</i> .	For proper nouns like <i>eBay</i> and <i>iPhone</i> , use lowercase for the first letter, even at the beginning of a sentence.
<b>Race-Related Terms</b>	<p>Capitalize <i>Black</i> as a racial or ethnic identity. Do not capitalize <i>white</i>.</p> <p>Do not use a hyphen in terms like <i>African American</i> and <i>Italian American</i>, whether they're used as nouns or adjectives.</p>	<p>Capitalize <i>Black</i> as a racial or ethnic identity. For consistency, capitalize <i>White</i> when used this way.</p> <p>Do not use a hyphen in terms like <i>African American</i> and <i>Italian American</i>, whether they're used as nouns or adjectives, unless the author or publisher prefers the hyphen.</p>
<b>Serial Comma</b>	Do not use a serial (Oxford) comma in a simple series. Do use a serial comma in a more complex series, including when one of the elements in the series contains a conjunction.	Use a serial comma in every series, regardless of length or complexity.
<b>Titles of Works</b>	<p>Use quotation marks around titles of books, newspapers, movies, TV shows, albums, songs, poems and other such works.</p> <p>Capitalize prepositions of four or more letters, conjunctions of four or more letters, and <i>to</i> when part of an infinitive. Also capitalize the first word, last word, verbs (including both parts of phrasal verbs), adjectives and adverbs.</p>	<p>Use italics for titles of books, newspapers, movies, TV shows, and albums. Use quotation marks for parts within those works: book chapters, poems, newspaper articles, episodes of TV shows, songs.</p> <p>Lowercase prepositions, regardless of length. Lowercase coordinating conjunctions. Capitalize the first word, last word, verbs (including both parts of phrasal verbs), adjectives, adverbs, and other conjunctions.</p>
<b>U.S. or US</b>	As an abbreviation for <i>United States</i> , do not include periods in <i>US</i> in headlines. Do include periods in <i>U.S.</i> in text.	As an abbreviation for <i>United States</i> , do not include periods in <i>US</i> .

Sources: *Associated Press Stylebook* (online edition, accessed December 1, 2022) and *The Chicago Manual of Style* (17th edition online, accessed December 1, 2022).