

# NJCU STYLE GUIDE

## **THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE**

The NJCU Style Guide is designed to ensure consistency across all channels and on behalf of all University communications. The guide is updated periodically to reflect critical updates. The most up-to-date guide can be found on the Office of Marketing and Communications homepage:

[njcu.edu/about/university-advancement/office-marketing-and-communications](http://njcu.edu/about/university-advancement/office-marketing-and-communications)

## AP style

New Jersey City University (NJCU) uses AP Style with some exceptions: see the Purdue Associate Press Style based on The Associated Press Stylebook 2012 (47th ed.): [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject\\_specific\\_writing/journalism\\_and\\_journalistic\\_writing/ap\\_style.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/journalism_and_journalistic_writing/ap_style.html)

## Merriam-Webster

For questions of spelling, use the online Merriam Webster dictionary. Use the first spelling presented, and note that word presentations in the dictionary supersede the stylebook.

## Capitalization

Titles Of People And Terms Within Text

People

Capitalize a person's title only when it's used directly before a name. This rule includes titles pertaining to government positions (like president, senator, mayor, ambassador, chief justice), religious positions (like pope, cardinal, rabbi), and other organizational positions (like chair, treasurer, general manager).

- Sue Henderson is the president of NJCU.
- NJCU President Sue Henderson
- She was appointed president of NJCU by the Board of Trustees.
- The president returned to the Gothic Lounge to greet students.
- Pope Benedict XVI succeeded Pope John Paul II.
- The school was treated to a visit by former President Barack Obama.
- John Smith was named superintendent of the Chicago school district.
- Superintendent John Smith began his career in the mailroom at the school.

## Titles Of Published Works

Always use title case.

Capitalize the first and last words, regardless of the length of the word or the part of speech.

Capitalize all nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and pronouns, regardless of the length of the word.

Capitalize prepositions of four or more letters (like over, from, and with).

Capitalize conjunctions of four or more letters (like unless and than), as well as if and how and why.

Do not capitalize:

- articles (a, an, and the)
- prepositions of three or fewer letters (such as of, in, and for)
- most conjunctions of three or fewer letters (like as, and, or, and but)
- The "to" in the infinitive form (e.g. to blog)

Examples:

- “Don’t Fence Me In”
- “Walk With Me in Moonlight”
- “Turn Off the Lights, I’m Home” (“Off” is an adverb here, part of the phrasal verb “turn off.”)
- “She Took the Deal off the Table” (Here, “off” is a preposition.)
- “What If I Do, What If She Won’t”
- “The Least She Could Do Is Cry”

## Branded Lowercase Proper Nouns

If the first word in a title is a proper noun that begins with a lowercase letter (like iPhone), try to reorder the title so that you can capitalize the name as the company or person usually does. If such a noun falls elsewhere in the title, use the company’s capitalization style (iPhone). For instance, “sales of iPod soar.”

## Numbers in Titles

For specific instructions on how to handle numbers in titles, see section on Numbers.

Hyphenated Compounds in Titles

If a hyphenated compound appears in title-style capitalization, capitalize the first word, and capitalize all subsequent words in the compound except for articles (a, an, and the), prepositions of three or fewer letters (like to and of), and coordinating conjunctions (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so). Ask yourself: If this word weren’t in a hyphenated compound, would I capitalize it? If the answer is yes, capitalize it as part of the hyphenated compound, too.

**Examples:**

- The Big Spender’s Budget How-To (capitalize any word, even “to,” at the beginning or end of a title.)
- Author of How-to book on Bee-Keeping Prone to Anaphylaxis
- Governor Slams E-Book About Her Re-Election Campaign
- Consumers prefer eco-friendly and cheap products
- Two-Thirds Vote Needed to Fund Research Into Blue-Green Algae Biofuel
- Profits Double on Word-of-Mouth Sales
- Audiences Love His Man-About-Town Sophistication
- Open Your Own eBay-Based Boutique
- Verbs (even short ones like is, be, and do) should always be capitalized. No matter how short, pronouns such as he, she, it, me, and you) should be capitalized. Capitalize both parts of phrasal verbs, multi-word verbs that include adverbs such as up and out (for example, tune in and hold on). Phrasal verbs don’t include the infinitive to form of a verb (to be, to run)—so lowercase the word to in such a verb.

## Company And Product Names

Follow an organization's conventions as to how it capitalizes and punctuates its names. many organizations (for example, FedEx) incorporate intercaps, or capital letters in the middle of the name. other organizations, such as Yahoo!, incorporate punctuation characters in their names. Some examples include:

- iPod
- iPad
- IHOP
- PayPal
- Visa
- MasterCard
- Tumblr
- YouTube

In some cases, you may not be able to replicate a graphic symbol used in a name. WALL·E, for instance, is difficult to reproduce and is generally spelled with a hyphen. When in doubt, look at some of the organization's press releases or at its copyright page if it has one.

For company, product, and website names that use all-lowercase letters, use an initial capital letter as you would for most other proper nouns. Otherwise, the names are hard to distinguish in text. for company names that include a capital letter somewhere (like eBay or iPod), follow the company's capitalization in most situations—even an internal capital letter will alert the reader that the word or phrase is a proper noun.

## Pronouns Referring To Companies

When referring to your own or to another company, use the third-person singular pronouns it and its. In the United States, a company is treated as a collective noun and requires a singular verb and a singular pronoun.

- The company anticipates an increase in its third-quarter spending. (Singular verb, singular possessive "its")

## PUNCTUATION

### Apostrophe

For plural nouns that don't already end in s, add an apostrophe and an s ('s) to the end of the word. For nouns (singular or plural) that already end in s, just add an apostrophe. Here are some examples:

- Jesus' words
- Arkansas' legislature
- The witness' testimony
- Many businesses' services

## Colon

In a sentence, capitalize the first word after the colon if what follows the colon could function alone as a complete sentence. Use a single space following the colon. Place colons outside quotation marks when used together. Here are some examples:

- This is it: the chance we've been waiting for!
- This is it: We'll never have to work again!
- I feel sad when I hear the ending to "The Road Not Taken": "And that has made all the difference."

## Comma

In a series consisting of three or more elements, separate the elements with commas. When a conjunction (like, and, or or) joins the last two elements in a series, include a comma before the conjunction. Here are some examples:

- He went to Smith, Jones, and Brown for financial advice.

When using an ampersand in place of and in a series (acceptable only in company names and when space is severely limited, as in a headline), do not insert a comma before it. The combination of comma and ampersand creates visual clutter.

- He went to Smith, Jones and Brown for financial advice.

## Hyphen

A hyphen is used to mean to, up to and including, or through in a range of numbers, dates, game scores, pages, and so on. It is also used to construct a compound adjective that includes a proper noun of more than one word. (New York, Queen Elizabeth, Lake Baikal, and World War II are all multiword proper nouns.) If you are unsure whether a word combination should be two words, two hyphenated words, or one compound word, check the online Merriam-Webster dictionary.

- Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) was president during the American Civil War (1861-1865).
- Jim was interested in the pre-Civil War era. (en dash connecting two-word proper noun "Civil War" with pre x "pre-")

## Em Dash

Use an em dash to set apart entire phrases from the main body of a sentence, and separate the dashes from the words that precede and follow it with a space. When a date range has no ending date, use an em dash instead.

- The last place she expected to find him – if she ever found him at all – was in the library.
- Mick Jagger (1943—), Brian Jones (1942–1969), and Keith Richards (1943—) were among the band's original members.

# NUMBERS

## Numbers In Titles

Use numerals for cardinal and ordinal numbers in headlines, email subject lines, and HTML page titles.

- In Pamplona, 8 injured in “Running of the Bulls” (Headline)
- Subject: Presentation File 1 of 2 attached (Email subject line)
- 5<sup>th</sup> Grader Wins 1st Place in Spelling Bee (Headline)

## Cardinal numbers

Spell out cardinal numbers (one, two, and so on) and ordinal numbers (first, second, and so on) below 10, but use numerals for numbers 10 and above.

## Percentages

- When expressing percentages, always use numerals and the percentage sign. Do not spell out percentages.

## Time

Always use a.m. and p.m. for indicating time. Include periods in each term (a.m. and p.m.) unless a default is in place (e.g., the NJCU.edu website uses AM and PM as the default within the calendar functionality). Use Eastern Standard Time (EST) when observing standard time (winter), and eastern daylight time (EDT) when observing daylight saving time (summer).

- Read reviews of more than 350 restaurants in your city.
- Aunt Bea’s pickles won first place at the fair.
- With a premium license, install the software on three computers.
- Does your building have a 13th floor?
- The study revealed that 8% of respondents were ambivalent.
- The webinar will be held on Friday, August 27 at 4 p.m. EDT.

## Telephone Numbers

Telephone numbers should be represented with hyphens as opposed to parentheses or periods:

Correct:  
201-200-2472  
44-020-7123-1234

## Numerals As Coordinates

Use numerals when referring to numbers that a person must type, such as for coordinates in tables and worksheets, and for parts of a document, such as page numbers or line references.

- Type 5 and press Enter.
- Select row 3, column 5 of the worksheet.
- Refer to line 9 of the transcript.

## Numerals In Categories

If a passage contains two or more numbers that refer to the same category of information and one is 10 or higher, use numerals for all numbers referring to that category. When numbers are treated consistently, readers can recognize the relationship between them more easily.

- The delegation included 3 women and 11 men.
- He was the 9th person chosen for the 10-person team.
- The most popular vote-getters included three women and nine men.
- Only 3 women and 11 men attended the four-day event.

## Large Numbers

Express large and very large numbers in numerals followed by million, billion, and so forth. If expressing a number greater than 999 in numerals, use a comma.

- 5 billion people
- 1,200 years ago

## Millions And Billions

When stating million or billion with a numeral, don't hyphenate, even before a noun. Use a hyphen between the numeral and million or billion if the expression is part of a compound adjective that takes a hyphen elsewhere.

- A \$6 million lawsuit
- The 400-million-served mark

If space is tight (for example, in headlines, tables, diagrams, or text messages), some abbreviations are acceptable.

- mil (million). see "mil."
- bil (billion). see "bil."
- K (thousand) - Among other things, K can stand for thousand, kilobytes, kilobits, and kilograms. Use K only if its meaning is clear from the context.

## At The Beginning Of A Sentence

Avoid starting a sentence with a numeral. If you can't avoid it, spell out the number.

- 450 students participated in last night's lecture. (avoid)
- Four hundred and fifty students participated in last night's lecture.
- Last night, 450 students participated in the lecture.

A year may be written in numerals at the beginning of a sentence. It's okay to start a headline with a numeral if space is tight or if the numeral makes the headline more eye-catching or easier to scan or understand.

- 1967 was the summer of love in San Francisco.
- 8 Diet Tips
- Two 5-Year-old boys found; one still missing

## Ordinals And Suffixes

Avoid expressing ordinals with superscript letters (such as 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and so on). Ordinals with superscript formatted in a word processor may not display correctly in some places, such as email, and the use in writing of these suffixes is becoming increasingly archaic. Do not use "th" endings or their equivalent when stating dates (i.e., do not write Join us on June 10<sup>th</sup>).

It's important to properly cite sources in all NJCU publications, whether online, printed, or projected. If you've got a case not covered here, find a way to attribute your source that seems appropriate to the medium. Choosing not to cite your source is an unacceptable alternative.

## Link Attribution

When including links in external content such as blog posts and ebooks, use anchor text when possible. Linking to other articles and websites is a best practice.

- NJCU provides excellence in education.
- Visit NJCU.edu for more information. (When including links in presentations, you can use the domain as anchor text.)

## Image Attribution

When using photos or images from Flickr or another online source under the creative commons license, they must be attributed. When attributing an image, please use the following format and link back to the original source image using the photographer's name as anchor text.

- Image Credit: linked source

## COMMONLY TROUBLESOME WORDS

- alt text  
Short for alternative text, which is text entered into the HTML alt attribute associated with an image on a web page.

- app  
Short term for application. Plural: apps. Do not use if there's any room for confusion.
  - A/B test  
also called split testing; at Hubspot, we use a/b testing and write it with the slash.
  - B2B  
Abbreviation for business-to-business.
  - BA  
Abbreviation for bachelor of arts. No periods.
  - Best-seller (n.), best-selling (adj.)  
Note hyphen
  - beta  
Capitalize beta if it is part of an official product name. Otherwise, lowercase it.  
*Sign up for the new Yahoo! Messenger beta. try the beta version of Yahoo! messenger.*
  - Blog (n., adj., v.)  
Preferred to weblog (lowercase)
  - business-to-business  
hyphenated (abbreviation: B2B)
  - call-to-action, calls-to-action, CTA, CTAs  
Always hyphenate when used as a noun (as in "call-to-action button" or "call-to action manager"). Whenever possible, try to use CTA or CTAs instead of hyphenated version (it's a mouthful).
  - Two words, no hyphen
  - checkin (n.) checked-in (adj.), check in (v)  
one word when used as a noun or an adjective. Two words when used as a verb. (Refers to social networks)
  - cell phone (n., adj.)  
Two words, no hyphen  
*He left the message on my cell phone. Type in your cell phone number.*
  - clickthrough (n., adj.), click through (v.)  
one word when used as a noun or an adjective. Two words when used as a verb.  
*The company's online ads consistently earn a high clickthrough rate. Click through to the last page to see your score.*
  - crowdsource, crowdsourcing  
One word.
  - do's and don'ts  
Note the apostrophes. This is actually proper AP style, but try to avoid using this construction if at all possible as the perception is that it looks incorrect.
  - e.g.  
Abbreviation meaning for example. Note periods. Don't include a space after the first period. Ok to use when space is a consideration; otherwise, use for example, for instance or such as. if used, always include a comma after the last period. see also "i.e." and "ex." as each of these has different meanings and are not interchangeable.
- Enter a search term (e.g., admissions, biology, athletics) into the box.
- ebook  
all lowercase (in titles/headlines and at the beginning of sentences, capitalize the "e" but not the "b").

- ecommerce
- email (n., adj., v.)  
One word, no hyphen. Plural: email messages and emails are both acceptable.
- Facebook
- Facebook Page  
Capitalize (Exception: lowercase when saying “pages on Facebook”).
- Facebook Profile  
Capitalize (Exception: lowercase when saying “profiles on Facebook”).
- Facebook group  
Capitalize (Exception: lowercase when saying “groups on Facebook”).
- geolocation  
One word. the geographic location of an internet- connected computer, or the process of determining that location.
- geotagging (n.) geotag (v.)  
one word. the verb means to add geographic data (such as longitude and latitude coordinates) to a photo or other media file.
- Google  
according to google guidelines, it is not okay to use this trademark as a verb. Use search, search for, or search on instead.
- Hashtag #
- Homepage
- how-to (n., adj.)  
Note hyphen when used as a noun or an adjective. Plural noun: how-tos.  
*Your How-to guide to Home buying (headline set in title case)*  
*Home-buying How-to (another headline in title case)*
- i.e.  
abbreviation meaning that is. Note periods. Do not include a space after the first period. Okay to use when space is a consideration; otherwise use that is, in other words, or equivalent. If used, include a comma after the last period. (Note that “i.e.” does not have the same meaning as “e.g.”)
- internet  
lowercase.
- IT  
Abbreviation for Information Technology. Abbreviation is always acceptable.
- keyword, key word (n.)  
one word when referring to terms that are used on a web page to optimize it for search engines. use two words in other cases — for example, when key is a synonym for primary or most important.  
*An SEO specialist can help you determine the best keywords to use on your web page. She heard little else that he said; the key word in the sentence was “love.”*
- LinkedIn  
“L” and “I” are capitalized.
- Login) n., adj.); log in, log in to (v.)  
One word when used as a noun or an adjective. Two words when used as a verb,

which may be followed by the preposition to. Note that sign in is preferred as it sounds less technical.

*Anyone can create a mashup with the right technology.*

*Use our tool to mash up RSS feeds into a single view.*

- MBA  
Abbreviation for master of business administration. No periods.
- metadata (n.)  
one word
- news feed (n.)
- news release  
Use instead of “press release” whenever possible
- nonprofit  
one word
- Okay (n., v., adv.)  
To be used interchangeably with OK. Do not use variations such as Ok and o.k., which are incorrect.
- Opt-in (n. adj.), opt in (v.)  
Hyphenated as a noun or an adjective. Two words as a verb.  
*The opt-in has been disabled.*  
*To receive electronic statements, you must opt in.*
- Page view  
Two words. The viewing of a web page by one visitor.  
*Advertisers consider how many page views a site receives when deciding where and how to advertise.*
- Real-time (adj.), real time (n.)  
Hyphenated when used as an adjective; not hyphenated when used as a noun
- Retweet
- Screen name
- Screenshot
- Setup (n., adj.), set up (v.)  
One word when used as a noun or as an adjective. Two words when used as a verb.  
*Set up your GothicNet account.*  
*Check out your GothicNet homepage.*  
*Your setup fee has been waived.*
- sign-in (n., adj.); sign in, sign in to (v.)  
as a noun or an adjective, it’s hyphenated. as a verb, it’s two words, which may be followed by the preposition to.  
*All visitors must sign in on the sign-in page.*  
*Visitors can sign in to Yahoo! Mail automatically.*  
*Choose your preferences for sign-in and security.*
- sign-out (n., adj.); sign out, sign out of (v.)  
as a noun or an adjective, it’s hyphenated. as a verb, it’s two words, which may be followed by the preposition of.
- sign-up (n., adj.), sign up (v.)  
Hyphenate when used as a noun or an adjective. two words when used as a verb.  
*Sign up for the service.*  
*Fill in the sign-up form.*  
*Sign-up is free.*

- since  
not a synonym for “because.” can be confused with the sense of “over the time that has passed” rather than “as a result of.” use “because” instead of since when possible. This also applies to “due to” and “owing to” and “due to the fact that” and other, needlessly wordy ways of saying “because.”
- site map
- slideshow (n., adj.)
- smartphone
- swag  
Free goods. not schwag or shwag.
- text (n., v.)  
Short form of text message. Plural: texts. Other forms: texted, texting.  
*Did you get my text?*  
*Don't text while driving*  
*She was texting during the lecture.*
- Text message (n.)  
Two words when used as a noun. Note hyphen when used as an adjective or a verb.  
*She had a heated text-message argument with her boyfriend. Did you get my text message?*  
*I'll text-message you with the details.*
- touchscreen (n., adj.)
- toward (not towards)
- tweet
- Twitter
- URL  
All capitals. Stands for Uniform Resource Locator. Abbreviation is always acceptable. Plural URLs
- U.S. (n., adj.)  
Abbreviation for United States. Note period, no space. US or U. S. The single exception is specifying currency in prices; in this case, do not include the periods.
- USA  
Abbreviation for United States of America. Abbreviation is always acceptable.
- Username  
Lowercase, one word.
- video camera
- videoconference
- voicemail  
one word, lowercase. not voice mail.
- web (n., adj.)  
Lowercase.
- Webcam
- Webcast
- Webinar
- web page
- website
- whitepaper
- wiki  
Lowercase. Plural: wikis.
- word-of-mouth (n., adj.)  
Note hyphens when used as a noun or adjective.

