

BRISTOL STYLE GUIDELINES

Bristol Community College’s Marketing & Communications department generally follows The Associated Press (AP) Stylebook, with adjustments based on common practices in higher education, established norms and our brand guidelines.

The Bristol Style Guidelines ensure consistency across the college in materials such as Bristol Weekly articles, internal emails and promotional publications. These guidelines are not suitable for academic journals, scholarly literature, grant proposals or creative promotional materials, which often have specific requirements and style guides.

Additionally, at Bristol Community College, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) are central to our core values. We recognize the power of language in reflecting the diversity of those we serve. Our commitment to DEI goes beyond a single effort; we are dedicated to continuous learning and progress.

We have implemented a [DEI checklist](#) to guide our communication practices. This checklist serves as a resource to incorporate DEI principles into our daily work and materials, promoting inclusivity and equity. It encourages reflection on aspects of DEI that may otherwise be overlooked and is intended for those already familiar with the subject, not as an educational tool.

Please consider this information along with our clarifications on common usage and deviations from the AP Stylebook guidelines. Note that this is not an exhaustive guide. To use the Table of Contents, click “Ctrl” + the selection.

CONTACT

Marketing & Communications Team

Phone: 774.357.2169

BristolCC.edu/BrandCentral

Email: Communications@BristolCC.edu

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ABBREVIATED WORDS

Days of Week

In general, always put the day of the week with the date. Example: Monday, Oct. 14, 2019.

Do not abbreviate days of the week.

For Example/In Other words

Use e.g., for example and i.e., in other words. Example: The college is closed for specific holidays: (e.g., New Year's Day, Christmas, Thanksgiving etc.).

Junior/Senior

Abbreviate junior or senior directly after a name with no comma to set it off. Example: John F. Kennedy Jr.

Months

Spell out the **month** when it is used alone or with a year. Abbreviate the month when it is used with a date.

- Example: October 2019
- Example: Oct. 14, 2019.
- When used with a date, **abbreviate** only the following **months**: Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec.

Numbered Addresses

Abbreviate Avenue, Boulevard and Street in numbered addresses. Example: He lives on Pennsylvania Avenue. He lives at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.

State Abbreviations

Spell out names of all states when used alone and in body text. Example: He is from New Bedford, Mass. His address is 100 Purchase Street, New Bedford, Mass., 02740. Do not use postal code abbreviations.

- Ala. — Alabama.
- Alaska — this state is not abbreviated in text.
- Ariz. — Arizona.
- Ark. — Arkansas.
- Calif. — California.
- Colo. — Colorado.
- Conn. — Connecticut.
- Del. — Delaware.
- Fla. — Florida.
- Ga. — Georgia.
- Hawaii — this state is not abbreviated in text.
- Idaho — this state is not abbreviated in text.
- Ill. — Illinois.
- Ind. — Indiana.
- Iowa — this state is not abbreviated in text.
- Kan. — Kansas.
- Ky. — Kentucky.
- La. — Louisiana.
- Maine — this state is not abbreviated in text.
- Md. — Maryland.

- Mass. — Massachusetts.
- Mich. — Michigan.
- Minn. — Minnesota.
- Miss. — Mississippi.
- Mo. — Missouri.
- Mont. — Montana.
- Neb. — Nebraska.
- Nev. — Nevada.
- N.H. — New Hampshire.
- N.J. — New Jersey.
- N.M. — New Mexico.
- N.Y. — New York.
- N.C. — North Carolina.
- N.D. — North Dakota.
- Ohio — this state is not abbreviated in text.
- Okla. — Oklahoma.
- Ore. — Oregon.
- Pa. — Pennsylvania.
- R.I. — Rhode Island.
- S.C. — South Carolina.
- S.D. — South Dakota.
- Tenn. — Tennessee.
- Texas — this state is not abbreviated in text.
- Utah — this state is not abbreviated in text.
- Vt. — Vermont.
- Va. — Virginia.
- Wash. — Washington.
- W. Va. — West Virginia.
- Wis. — Wisconsin.
- Wyo. — Wyoming.
- Also: District of Columbia (D.C.).

ACADEMIC DEGREES

Degree Names

associate - No apostrophe or “s” for associate degree. Example: He received an associate degree in human services.

bachelor's/master's - Lowercase and use apostrophe for bachelor's degree and master's degree.

credentials - Use abbreviations for degrees only when you need to include a list of credentials after a name; set them off with commas. Example: Peter White, LL.D., Ph.D.

full degree - Capitalize full degree name, but not major (unless it's a language or nationality). Example: Bachelor of Science in engineering or Bachelor of Arts in English.

BRISTOL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Use the full name on the first reference, then abbreviate as “Bristol” or the college in subsequent references. Use Bristol Community College (Bristol) in formal writing, speeches and public forums when referencing the college. Do not use BCC in formal communication.

Campus vs. Location

Bristol offers programs of study across its four locations in Fall River, Attleboro, New Bedford, Taunton and online. Attleboro, Fall River and New Bedford are Campuses. Taunton is a Center. Therefore, when referencing all the college locations use “locations” not campuses.

- Bristol Community College's New Bedford Campus or Bristol’s New Bedford Campus.
- Bristol has services at all its college locations.
- Bristol’s Taunton Center houses the athletics program.

Please note that there is a BCC (Berkshire Community College) in the Massachusetts 15 community college system.

The National Offshore Wind Institute

Use the full name on the first reference, then abbreviate as NOWI in subsequent references. It is pronounced NOW-EE. Use “the” in front of NOWI when referencing. “The NOWI is in New Bedford.” For more about the NOWI visit NOWI.org.

CAPITALIZATION

Airport

Capitalize as part of a proper name. Example: LaGuardia Airport, O'Hare International Airport.

The first name of an individual and the word international may be deleted from a formal airport name while the remainder is capitalized: John F. Kennedy International Airport, Kennedy International Airport or Kennedy Airport. Use whichever is appropriate in the context.

Do not make up names, however. There is no Boston Airport, for example. The Boston airport (lowercase airport) would be acceptable if for some reason the proper name, Logan International Airport, was not used.

Book titles, plays, films

Capitalize and enclose in quotes (single quotes if in headlines) the names of books, poems, plays, films, movie titles, opera titles, album and song titles, radio and television program titles and the titles of lectures, speeches and works of art.

Capitalize without quotes books that are primarily references, such as dictionaries, encyclopedias and almanacs.

Buildings

When referencing a building on the Fall River Campus, lowercase the word “building”. There are no dashes required between the letter and the word “building”. Example: H building or H bldg.

Campuses

Uppercase “C” in campus and center when it follows one of Bristol’s locations. Example: New Bedford Campus.

College

Always capitalize as a proper noun unless you are using a generic term: Example: Bristol Community College; the college (*not* the College – *This is a former practice in higher education and legal documents that we no longer use*).

Courses

Capitalize proper noun elements or numbered courses. Example: American history, English, Algebra 1, world history.

Department/Division

Do not capitalize department, division, board program, section, unit, etc., unless the word is part of a formal name. Example: Department of Higher Education, Board of Trustees, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences.

Email addresses

Bristol CC and name and/or department are capitalized. Example: HealthServices@BristolCC.edu.

Federal/State

Do not capitalize federal or state unless the word is part of a formal name.

Formal titles

Capitalize formal titles whether before or after a name and when used in a sentence (This is not AP style, this is preferred by the college).

Lowercase first lady or first gentleman (for the spouse of the president) and second lady or second gentleman (for the spouse of the vice president) because they are not official titles.

Lowercase titles if they are informal, appear without a person’s name or are set off before a name by commas.

These formal titles are capitalized and abbreviated as shown when used before a name, both inside and outside quotations. Example: Dr., Gov., Lt. Gov., Rep., Sen. On second reference, use the last name only. Generally, capitalize formal titles when they appear before a person’s name.

Headlines

Capitalize the first word, proper nouns and the first word after a colon (exception for composition titles).

Composition titles

Apply these guidelines to the titles of books, movies, plays, poems, albums, songs, operas, radio and television programs, lectures, speeches and works of art. Capitalize all words in a title except articles (a, an, the); prepositions of three or fewer letters (for, of, on, up, etc.); and conjunctions of three or fewer letters, (and, but, for, nor, or, so, yet, etc.) unless any of those start or end the title.

Programs

Lowercase the word “program”. Example: Nursing program, Dental Hygiene program.

Racial & Ethnic Identifiers

Capitalize Black in a racial, ethnic or cultural sense, conveying an essential and shared sense of history, identity and community among people who identify as Black, including those in the African diaspora and within Africa. The lowercase black is a color, not a person.

Capitalize Indigenous in reference to original inhabitants of a place.

Seasons

Lowercase the names of seasons unless they are used in a proper name. Example: Summer Olympics

Semesters

Lowercase the semesters unless followed by the year. Example: Fall 2019 vs. fall semester.

Websites

Provide links in the document, when possible. Do not include www. When writing the college's website, uppercase B and CC in BristolCC.edu BristolCC.edu/BrandCentral

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Inviting elected officials to your event

To ensure that all invitations to elected officials or dignitaries are organized appropriately and that all resources are considered, please adhere to the following guidelines:

Approval Process: No one is permitted to invite an elected official or dignitary without prior approval from the President's Office and the Marketing & Communications Office.

Vetting of Invitations: All invitations must be vetted through these channels to ensure that there are no conflicts with the President's schedule or other events taking place at the college.

Submission Timeline: Invitations should be submitted for approval at least 4 weeks in advance of the event.

Documentation: Include relevant details such as the invitation's purpose, potential impact on our organization, and logistical considerations.

Coordination: Work closely with the Marketing & Communications Office to ensure messaging is consistent and aligns with our strategic objectives.

By following these steps, we can effectively manage our relationships with elected officials and dignitaries while maximizing our organizational resources.

[Reference Document](#) *The U.S. Order of Precedence is an advisory document maintained by the Ceremonials Division of the Office of the Chief of Protocol.*

Addressing political leaders and dignitaries

Addressing correctly at a speaking program is important to show respect and adhere to protocol. Here are some general guidelines for addressing different political leaders:

Mayor

"Mayor [Last Name]" or "Mr./Ms. Mayor". Example: "Mayor Smith" or "Mr. Mayor, thank you for joining us today".

Governor

"Governor [Last Name]" or "Governor". Example: "Governor Johnson" or "Governor, it's an honor to have you here".

State Legislators

For State Senators: "Senator [Last Name]" or "Senator". Example: "Senator Roberts" or "Senator, your support has been invaluable".

For State Representatives: "Representative [Last Name]" or "Representative". Example: "Representative Lee" or "Representative, thank you for your dedication".

Federal Delegation

For U.S. Senators: "Senator [Last Name]" or "Senator". Example: "Senator Davis" or "Senator, your insights are greatly appreciated".

For U.S. Representatives: "Congressman/Congresswoman [Last Name]" or "Congressman/Congresswoman". Example: "Congresswoman Brown" or "Congressman, thank you for your leadership".

Both "Representative" and "Congressman/Congresswoman" are correct and widely used, so you can choose based on your preference or the specific context of your communication. "Dear Representative Smith," "Representative Jones, thank you for your support."

President or Vice President

Address as "Mr. President" or "Madam President" for the President of the United States. Example: "Mr. President, it's an honor to welcome you."

Address as "Mr. Vice President" or "Madam Vice President" for the Vice President of the United States. Example: "Madam Vice President, your presence here today is inspiring."

Other Dignitaries

For other dignitaries or officials, use their appropriate title and last name. Example: "Ambassador [Last Name]" or "Secretary [Last Name]".

Ambassador

"Your Excellency" (if from a foreign country).

"Ambassador [Last Name]."

Secretary (Cabinet Member)

"Secretary [Last Name]." Introduce with full title and include state or U.S. Massachusetts Secretary of Education, Patrick Tutwiler and United States Secretary of Education, Miguel Angel Cardona.

Judge

"Judge [Last Name]."

General (Military)

"General [Last Name]."

Professor (Academic)

"Professor [Last Name]."

Reverend (Clergy)

"Reverend [Last Name]."

Doctor

"Dr. [Last Name]."

Honorable (former officials)

"The Honorable [Full Name]."

When addressing these dignitaries in person at an event, it's essential to use their appropriate title followed by their last name. If you are unsure of their specific title or how they prefer to be addressed, you can politely ask them or check with event organizers for guidance beforehand.

Speaking order of elected officials at an event

The protocol for speaking order of elected officials at events may differ from the recognition order. It's advisable to confirm this with assistants before the event. Typically, the "most-local official" (Mayor) is invited to speak first, although this can vary depending on the event's specifics. Consider why each person is asked to speak – whether for securing project funding or welcoming to the city. The speaking order generally follows this hierarchy from the highest national level down to the local level. This order ensures that speakers are acknowledged according to their level of responsibility and authority in government. It is okay to ask.

Listed from highest to lowest level of delegation:

President of the United States

Address as "Mr. President" or "Madam President".

Vice President of the United States

Address as "Mr. Vice President" or "Madam Vice President".

Governor

Address as "Governor [Last Name]".

Mayor

Address as "Mayor [Last Name]".

U.S. Senators

Address as "Senator [Last Name]".

U.S. Representatives (Congressmen/Congresswomen)

Address as "Congressman/Congresswoman [Last Name]".

State Senators

Address as "Senator [Last Name]".

State Representatives

Address as "Representative [Last Name]".

Local Elected Officials (City Council Members, County Commissioners)

Address using their title and last name, such as "Councilman/Councilwoman [Last Name]" or "Commissioner [Last Name]".

Written Communication to Elected Officials

When addressing written correspondence to an elected official, it is important to use a respectful and appropriate title. Here are some guidelines for titling a letter or email to different elected officials:

President of the United States

"Dear Mr. President" or "Dear Madam President". In the salutation: "President [Last Name]".

Vice President of the United States

"Dear Mr. Vice President" or "Dear Madam Vice President". In the salutation: "Vice President [Last Name]".

Governor

"Dear Governor [Last Name]". In the salutation: "Governor [Last Name]".

U.S. Senators

"Dear Senator [Last Name]" In the salutation: "Senator [Last Name]".

U.S. Representatives (Congressmen/Congresswomen)

"Dear Congressman/Congresswoman [Last Name]" In the salutation: "Congressman/Congresswoman [Last Name]".

State Senators and State Representatives

"Dear Senator [Last Name]" or "Dear Representative [Last Name]" In the salutation: "Senator [Last Name]" or "Representative [Last Name]".

Mayor

"Dear Mayor [Last Name]" In the salutation: "Mayor [Last Name]".

Local Elected Officials (City Council Members, County Commissioners)

Use their appropriate title and last name. For example, "Dear Councilman/Councilwoman [Last Name]" or "Dear Commissioner [Last Name]".

In formal correspondence, it's best to address the official by their title, followed by their last name. This shows respect and acknowledges their position of authority. Always ensure to spell their name and title correctly, and if in doubt, verify the proper form of address from official websites or correspondence guidelines provided by their office.

Addressing a former elected official

When speaking directly to a former senator or mayor:

Address them as "Senator [Last Name]" or "Mayor [Last Name]" respectfully.

If you're unsure of their preference, you can politely ask how they prefer to be addressed.

Formal Events

If at a formal event where titles are used:

Introduce them as "Former Senator [Last Name]" or "Former Mayor [Last Name]". For example, "Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Former Senator Smith."

After leaving office, U.S. Senators and Representatives are often referred to as "The Honorable [Full Name]" in formal contexts and introductions. For example, "The Honorable John Smith."

In some cases, other government officials such as Cabinet members, ambassadors, and certain appointed positions may also be addressed as "The Honorable [Full Name]," particularly in formal written communication or when introducing them at events.

Former elected officials should be recognized at an event at the end of the list. "Former Mayor [Last Name]."

It's important to maintain respect and courtesy when addressing former officials, recognizing their past service and contributions. If you are unsure of their former title or how they prefer to be addressed, it's acceptable to ask them directly or to use a more general respectful form of address such as "Mr." or "Ms." followed by their last name.

HYPHENATION

Use hyphens to link all the words in a compound adjective.

Example: The five-volume report called for cleaning up the area over a 10-year period.

Do not use a hyphen if the compound except for the adverb *very* and all adverbs that end in *-ly*

Example: a very big project, barely legal procedures.

Prefixes: Preferences on whether to use a hyphen following a prefix are based on usage and Webster's New World College Dictionary. Do not hyphenate when using a prefix with a word starting with a consonant. Always check the dictionary.

Three rules are constant:

1. Use a hyphen if the prefix ends in a vowel and the word that follows begins with the same vowel.

Exceptions: *cooperate*, *coordinate*, and double-e combinations such as *pre-establish*, *preeminent*, *preeclampsia*, *preempt*.

2. Use a hyphen if the word that follows is capitalized.

3. Use a hyphen to join doubled prefixes: *sub-subparagraph*.

Re words: Use the hyphen with the prefix *re* only when *re* means *again* AND omitting the hyphen would cause confusion with another word.

NUMBERS

In general, spell out numbers one through nine and use figures for numbers 10 and higher.

Exceptions include:

Addresses - Spell out numbered streets nine and under: Five Sixth Ave.; 3012 50th St.; No. 10 Downing St. Use the abbreviations Ave., Blvd. and St. only with a numbered address: 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. Spell the full address abbreviations out and capitalize them only if the address doesn't have a number. Example: Pennsylvania Avenue.

Ages - Use hyphens for ages expressed as adjectives before a noun or as substitutes for a noun. Examples: *a 6-year-old girl; an 8-year-old law; the 7-year-old house. A 5-year-old boy, but the boy is 5 years old. The boy, 5, has a sister, 10. The race is for 3-year-olds. The woman is in her 30s. 30-something, but Thirty-something* to start a sentence.

Beginning of sentence - Spell out numbers used at the beginning of a sentence. Example: "Ten thousand people marched on the capital." Exception: Never spell out years – "1999 was a terrible year for technology companies."

Cents - 8 cents.

Dates - March 4. Notice that dates take cardinal numbers, not ordinal numbers (don't use 4th).

Decimals - Use decimals (up to two places) for amounts in the millions and billions that do not require a precise figure. Example: \$3.74 billion.

- **Dimensions** - 5 foot 2 inches, 5-by-9 cell.

Dollars - \$3. Do not include a period and two zeroes when referring to an even dollar figure.

Highways - Route 7.

Millions/billions - 6 billion people.

Numerals over 999 - Use commas to set off each group of three digits in numerals higher than 999 (except for years and addresses). Example: 12,650.

Percent - 1 %.

Pluralize Letters - To form a plural of a single letter, use "s" and an apostrophe. Example: All the B's lined up to the right.

Pluralize Multiple Letters - To form a plural of multiple letters, add an "s" with no apostrophe. Example: She mastered her ABCs in little time.

Pluralize Numbers - Add an "s" but no apostrophe to a number to make it plural.

- Example: "She kept rolling 7s."
- Example: the 1980s.

Use an apostrophe on a decade only if cutting off the initial figures. Example: '80s.

Speed - 8 mph.

Temperatures - 2 degrees.

PHONE NUMBERS AND EXTENSIONS

College publications always use direct extensions for faculty and staff members:

Use direct extension: 774.357.3164.

Do not use: 508-678-2811, ext. 3164.

Use periods, not parenthesis, for telephone area codes. Example: 774.357.3164.

If you must use the extension, after the phone number, use a comma before the extension.

Extensions are not capitalized: 978.632.6600, ext. 3164. Do not write out the word extension. Only use the abbreviation, "ext.".

PUNCTUATION & SPACING

Commas

Don't use a comma before a conjunction in a simple series. A simple series is defined as one in which no elements contain the words *and* or *or*. Example: The dinner choices were chicken, cod or beef.

Use a comma for series that includes elements containing *and* or *or*. Example: The menu offered a choice of bacon and eggs, pancakes, or waffles.

Use a comma before the concluding conjunction in a complex series of phrases. Example: The main points to consider are whether the athletes are skillful enough to compete, whether they have the stamina to endure the training, and whether they have the proper mental attitude.

Use commas to separate a series of adjectives equal in rank. If the commas can be replaced by the word *and* without changing the sense, the adjectives are equal. Example: a thoughtful, precise manner; a dark, dangerous street.

Dashes

Associated Press Style is to use dashes, not bullets, for lists that follow a colon. The college prefers bullets but punctuates them per AP Style. After each bullet, capitalize the first letter and use periods at the end of each item.

Semicolon

Clarify a series that includes several commas. Include a semicolon before the conjunction. Example: Parts for the carrier are made in Tampa, Fla.; Austin, Texas; and Baton Rouge, La."

- **Punctuation with quotation marks**

Periods and commas always go within quotation marks.

The dash, semicolon, question mark and exclamation point go within the quotation marks when they apply to the quoted matter only. They go outside when they apply to the whole sentence.

Spacing

Use a single space after a period. (Do not use two spaces after a period.)

TECHNOLOGICAL TERMS

Common terms (as of 2024)

- AI (Artificial Intelligence).
- algorithm
- AR (Augmented Reality).
- cloud.
- cybersecurity and cyberattack (one word).
- hashtag.
- IM (IMed, IMing; for first reference).
- internet (lowercase unless referring to the formal entity).
- social media.
- streaming (music/video).

- VR (Virtual Reality).
- web page (two words).
- web page URLs: do not use "www." before URLs in writing.
- website (one word).

List of top social media channels (as of 2024)

- Facebook.
- YouTube.
- Instagram.
- X (formerly known as Twitter).
- LinkedIn.
- Pinterest.
- Snapchat.
- TikTok.
- Reddit.
- WhatsApp.
- Tumblr.
- Discord.

TEMPERATURES

Use figures for all except zero. Use a word, not a minus sign, to indicate temperatures below zero.

- Example: The day's low was minus 10.
- Example: The day's low was 10 below zero.
- Also: 5-degree temperatures, temperatures fell 5 degrees, temperatures in the 30s (no apostrophe).

Temperatures get higher or lower, but they don't get warmer or cooler. Example: Temperatures are expected to rise in the area Friday.

TIME

Use lowercase a.m. and p.m., with periods. Always use figures, with a space between the **time** and the a.m. or p.m. If it's an exact hour, no ":00" is required.

Don't use 12 noon, use noon; no figures are required.

Don't use "midnight". AP found that many people disagree about whether it's the end of the previous day or the beginning of the next day, and ultimately, they decided the word is more confusing than useful.

Clarity is the goal, so don't use "midnight." Instead, they recommend you be more specific. Write either "11:59 p.m. Thursday" or "12:01 a.m. Friday" (or whatever day and time you mean).

When referencing time length – use "to" instead of a dash and do not repeat a.m. or p.m. if it is the same period of time. 2 to 3 p.m., instead of 2 p.m. – 3 p.m. or 2 – 3 p.m.

TIME ZONES

Capitalize the full name of the time in force within a particular zone: Eastern Standard Time, Eastern Daylight Time, Central Standard Time, etc.

Lowercase all but the region in short forms: the Eastern time zone, Eastern time, Mountain time, etc.

Spell out time zone in references not accompanied by a clock reading: Chicago is in the Central time zone.

The abbreviations EST, CDT, etc., are acceptable on first reference for zones used within the continental United States, Canada and Mexico only if the abbreviation is linked with a clock reading: noon EST, 9 a.m. PST. (Do not set off the abbreviations with commas.)

Spell out all references to time zones not used within the contiguous United States: When it is noon EDT, it is 1 p.m. Atlantic Standard Time and 8 a.m. Alaska Standard Time.

One exception to the spelled-out form: Greenwich Mean Time may be abbreviated as GMT on second reference if used with a clock reading. See GMT.

BRISTOL BRAND GUIDELINES

Please refer to the [Bristol Brand Guidelines](#) for direction on the use and general thematic look-and-feel of the Bristol brand.

REFERENCES

- [Apstylebook.com/](https://apstylebook.com/)
- [RDWGroup.com/blog/inviting-elected-officials-event](https://rdwgroup.com/blog/inviting-elected-officials-event)
- [NEA.org](https://nea.org)

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