STYLE GUIDE
CSI STYLE GUIDE
This is the latest version of our evolving style guide. It is intended to be used as a reference for CSI-specific words and phrases, not as a substitute for *The Chicago Manual of Style* (14th ed.) or *The American Heritage Dictionary*, the standard style references used for College publications. It also includes answers to some common questions about usage and punctuation.

A
Academic degrees: no periods (e.g., BA, BS, PhD, etc.)
achievement tests
addresses (College): building before room [South Administration Building (1A), Room 201]
administrative board, CSI Administrative Board
admissions office: Office of Admissions and Recruitment
adviser (not advisor), advisory
affirmative action
affirmative action officer
African American
age: 1-10 spell out; 11+, use numerals
alumnus (singular), alumni (plural), alumna (singular), alumnae (plural)
am (See also: times of day.)
audio-visual

B
bachelor's degree, BA, BS
bachelor of arts
B.C.E. (goes after the year: 1260 B.C.E.), instead of B.C.
bias-free language: If you are uncertain about possible bias in your writing consider whether you would want this said about you, or if you would say the same thing about someone of another race, sex, age, religion, or socio-economic background. If you answer “no” in either case, restate it. (See also: nonsexist language.)
biblical
Biology Department: Department of Biology
black (noun, adjective)
building names are capped (South Administration Building)
Campus Security: now Public Safety

catalog

CD-ROM (all caps)

C.E. (goes before the year: C.E. 1010), instead of A.D.

century: ninth century, 19th century; spell out numbers less than 11. Hyphenate adjectival forms (18th-century view).

chair: the nonsexist “chair” and “chairperson” are preferable to “chairman.”

chief financial officer, CFO

college: Lowercase when it is used in general (as noun or adjective). Cap only when it refers to CSI.

College Board examination(s), College Boards

College Council

commas: use for words in series of three or more after every item. Use in numbers greater than 999 (see also: numbers).

Commencement

Committee names are capped if official

computer programming languages: BASIC; FORTRAN; LOGO; Pascal

Convocation

course names and numbers: Refer to Catalog for official course names and numbers.

coursework

cross-country

cross-list

dates: use comma when including day (January 15, 1988) but not with month and year only (January 1988)

Dean’s List

decades: 1940s, ‘40s (no apostrophe before the s)

degrees (academic): capitalize when paired with a major (e.g., Bachelor of Arts in Music), but lower-case when used in general (e.g., She received a master’s degree).

department names: (e.g., Department of Biology [preferred], Biology Department). Formal and informal names may be used interchangeably, though audience sensitivity should be exercised.

Doctor of Philosophy
dollar: $10 million drive, $20 (not $20.00 or $20 dollars); use numerals, not words, for all dollar amounts

E
EdD
electronic mail, email (email addresses: use lowercase letters: jdoe@csi.cuny.edu)
email addresses: use all lowercase letters (e.g., jdoe@csi.cuny.edu)
Equal Opportunity Employer, EOE
emeritus (male, singular); emeriti (plural); emerita (fem., singular); emeritae (female, plural)
Executive Committee
extension, campus telephone: use “ext.” but not “x.”
extradepartmental

F
Faculty Senate
faculty-student ratio
fax (not FAX)
Financial Aid Form (FAF), financial aid applications
first-semester courses
first-year students (preferred over freshmen)
floors (in buildings): use first floor, second floor, not Floor 2, etc.
fundraising (verb), fundraising (adjective or noun), fundraiser (noun)

G
grade point average, GPA (not G.P.A.)
Guaranteed Student Loan Program (now Stafford Loan Program)

H
handbook, College handbook
handicapped: “persons with disabilities” is more acceptable
hearing-impaired (an adjective, not a noun)
high school (noun, adjective; no hyphen)
Hillel
historical: takes the article a, not an
honorary degree
honorary doctorate
honors thesis
Hub, The (not The HUB)
human resources, Office of Human Resources

hyphen: Hyphenate compound adjectives that precede nouns (bone-dry soil, a well-designed car).
Do not use hyphens when adjectives follow nouns (the soil was bone dry, the car was well designed).
Do not hyphenate well-established compound modifiers (a high school baseball team).
Do not hyphenate after an adverb ending in “ly” (He is easily amused).
Suspensive hyphenation: She had a ten-day vacation.

I
ID, IDs, CSI ID
Inc.: do not use a comma: Fred’s Garage Inc.
independent study
interdepartmental
international students: better than “foreign” or “non-native”
the Internet, the Net
Do not italicize URLs, set them in bold
italics: Indicate with an underline in typed copy; A Tale of Two Cities, when typeset, becomes A Tale of Two Cities.
italics for foreign terms: Italicize words that have not been incorporated into everyday use. When using a foreign term, only the first mention should be italicized.

IT: Information Technology

J
Jr.: do not use a comma: John Smith Jr.

K

L
L.A.N.: local area network (computer network)
local area network: L.A.N. (computer network)
majors: Use lowercase for subjects (except in cases with a proper noun, such as English language and literature, French language and literature, etc.).

magazine and newspaper titles: Underline (italicize) complete title as it appears on publication (The Chicago Tribune, The New York Times, but Time magazine).

master of arts; in general: Master of Arts when paired with a subject master’s degree, MA, MS, MAT, MBA, MFA, MSEd, etc.

Media Services

midnight (not 12:00pm or 12 midnight)

minority: Use specific reference when possible (African American, Asian American; do not hyphenate noun form), or “person of color,” “women of color” when appropriate.

Mission Statement

N

NCAA divisions use roman numerals, not arabic numerals: Division III (CSI’s teams are Division III teams)

the Net (short for the Internet)

nondiscrimination statement

nonsexist language: Masculine nouns and pronouns are not generic; mankind, chairman, firemen, he, his, etc., should not be assumed to include women. These can all be restated to be nonsexist (humankind, chair, firefighters).

Rewrite the sentence to eliminate the pronoun (e.g., instead of “Each firefighter wears his hat,” write “Each firefighter wears a hat.”).

Rewrite the sentence in the plural (if this does not alter the specific meaning of the sentence; [e.g., instead of “Each firefighter wears his hat,” write “Firefighters wear their hats.”])

Use “he or she,” or “his or her” when possible, but do not overuse them.

Use generic nouns: representatives, not congressmen; nurse, not male nurse; supervisor, not foreman.

Replace titles that stereotype women: student, not coed; architect or engineer, not career woman.

nontraditional students, students of nontraditional college age

noon (not 12:00am, 12 p.m. or 12 noon)

numbers: academic year (2001-2002) repeats the century and takes an en dash (which, when typeset, is the width of the letter “n,” slightly wider than a hyphen). Other inclusive years are also written in full (e.g., 1936-1942).

Spell out numbers one through ten, use figures for 11 and above even when this means mixing words and numerals in one context (e.g., write “11 rubberbands and five paperclips”).
Use figures for all fractions larger than one; spell out for less than one (1/4, two-fifths). Use a comma in numbers of four or more digits (8,254), except in dates, addresses, and page numbers.

Use cardinal numbers in dates (May 5, not May 5th).

Do not start a sentence with a numeral. Spell out a number, no matter how large, if it is the first word of the sentence, or rewrite the sentence.

O

offices: Office of Admissions and Recruitment (preferred) but also Admissions and Recruitment Office.

online, online catalog (no hyphen)

P

pass/fail, pass/fail grading option

PhD, PhDs

Possessives: For singular proper names ending in s, use an apostrophe s: Socrates's writings, Lincoln’s address.

Note about possessives: Proper style reserves possessives for ownership by a person. However, grammarians still do not consider it proper to use possessives such as Canada’s Prime Minister (it should be “the Prime Minister of Canada”).

Presidential search committee

professorships, named: capitalize complete titles, even after name: Donald Jacobs, Mary Nelson Professor Emeritus of Biology

Public Safety

Q

R

Registrar’s office, Office of the Registrar

résumé

RN

S

SAT score

Scholar-athlete

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)

security: use Public Safety

sexist language (see nonsexist language)

Sr.: do not use comma: John Jay Sr.
Stafford Loan Program: formerly Guaranteed Student Loan Program

state names: spell out in sentences, except in cases of conjunction with a city, county, or town (e.g., she was born in New York in 1960; she was born in Brooklyn, NY in 1960); use two-letter postal abbreviation (NJ, PA, etc.) in listings and addresses.

street, avenue, road, etc.: abbreviate except in listings/display

Student Activities Fee

student affairs office, Office of Student Affairs

student-faculty ratio

T

telephone numbers: do not use parentheses with area code or hyphens: use 1+ area code + number separated by periods: 1.718.982.2200

that/which: “That” is the restrictive pronoun; it serves to identify the noun preceding it. Example: The house that she bought was blue. “Which” is used with nonrestrictive clauses, which add information rather than define or limit what has gone before. Example: The hungry man went to the restaurant, which had won several awards over the years.

theatre (at CSI), use “theater” in generic use, unless the specific venue or organization uses the “re” spelling (e.g., Williamson Theatre; NeverLand Theatre Company).

Third World (noun and adjective)

TIAA-CREF retirement plan

times of day: Use pm and am (lowercase, no periods). In typeset material, use en dash (the width of the letter “n,” slightly wider than a hyphen) with inclusive times. Noon and midnight are lowercased and stand alone (i.e., not 12 noon). Examples: 8:30am–noon, 8:00am–10:00am

Titles (people)

Capitalize official titles before names (President Jane Smith, Dean Joseph Borkowski, Associate Professor Sara Doe).

Use uppercase for titles after names (Jane Smith, President of the College).

Move titles to follow names whenever possible (Jane Smith, President; Harold Collins, Assistant Professor of Theater).

Use lowercase for words used as descriptions rather than as formal titles (linguist Jane Doe).

Use lowercase for titles standing alone (the president, the dean, the director of graduate study).

Exception: Titles in display (mastheads, other listings) or in formal usage (programs, announcements) are often capped without regard to the above rules.
Titles (books, films, etc.): Italicize (underline) titles of books, magazines, newspapers, films, full-length plays, paintings, TV shows, and exhibitions. Put in quotes titles of short stories, poems, booklets, flyers, and lecture titles.

toward (not towards)

transgender, transgendered

trustees, CUNY Board of Trustees, board of trustees

T-shirt

U

United States (noun: ... arrived in the United States in 1956), U.S. (adjective: ... showed her U.S. passport)

UK

UN


username (computer user ID)

USSR

V

vice president

W

Washington, DC (set DC off with commas on both sides when used in a sentence) the Web (short for World Wide Web); Website, Webpage which: See that/which.

white (noun, adjective)

World Wide Web

Y

Z

ZIP code (not zip code, Zip Code or Zip code)