

Johns Hopkins School of Nursing Style Guide

Below is an alphabetical list of common and not-so-common style rules that we should follow whenever possible. It is amended from the [university style guidelines](#), which were compiled by editors in the Office of Communications. Several entries simply note the correct spelling of frequently misspelled words.

Note: When adhering strictly to style might confuse or jar readers rather than help them, contact the Department of Marketing and Communications, or MarCom, and we can help you work around the problem.

Acronyms: When using the acronym for our school, write “Johns Hopkins School of Nursing (JHSON)” on first reference, then JHSON through the rest of the document.

Use other acronyms sparingly.

Academic and administrative titles: Titles that precede a name are capitalized. (Try to avoid titles before a name if they are more than two words. It gets clunky.) Titles that follow a name are lowercase unless they include a proper name, as in an endowed chair:

- Dean Patricia Davidson of the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing
- Patricia Davidson, dean of the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing
- Professor Phyllis Sharps, associate dean for community programs at the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing (not “Associate Dean for Community Programs Phyllis Sharps”)
- Professor Phyllis Sharps, Elsie M. Lawler Endowed Chair at the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing (not “Elsie M. Lawler Endowed Chair Phyllis Sharps”)

Academic degrees: Omit periods, as in PhD, RN, FAAN

Names of degrees are lowercase when spelled out. Note the use of the apostrophe when “of” is not present.

- a master of arts degree in philosophy
- a master of arts degree in English
- a master of science degree in biochemistry
- a master’s degree in nursing

Adviser: No “o.”

African-American: Hyphenate noun and adjective forms.

Ages: Always use numerals.

a.k.a: shorthand meaning “also known as.”

Alphabetization of hyphenated surnames: If hyphenated, use first surname, so Susan Brown-Smith comes before Susan Brownlee. Note: If there is no hyphen, use second surname, so Susan Brown Smith comes after Susan Brownlee.

Alumni: In general, use “alumni” for the group that includes men and women. AP style uses “alumnus” for a male graduate and “alumna” for a female graduate. If we’re referring back to grads of the all-female classes of the Johns Hopkins Hospital Training School for Nurses, they are “alumnae,” which is the plural of “alumna.”

a.m., p.m.: Use a space between the numeral and a.m. or p.m., so 1 p.m. or 11 a.m.

Ampersand: Use only as part of proper name, as in *U.S. News & World Report*.

Anne M. Pinkard Building, School of Nursing: This is our home, at 525 N. Wolfe St. Baltimore, MD 21205.

Anti: In general, no hyphen, as in “anticoagulant.” Exceptions would be with proper names like “anti-Microsoft” or odd constructions like “anti-immunization,” where “ii” could confuse the eye.

Art titles: Titles of paintings, drawings, photographs, films, plays, statues, and other works of art are italicized.

Best-seller, best-selling

Blogs: Titles of blogs should be italicized, as in *Deadspin* or *The Huffington Post*. Titles of individual blog entries that appear on the site should be in quotation marks.

Campus: Lowercase, as in Homewood campus, East Baltimore campus

Canceled, canceling

Capitalization: Words like university, hospital, institute, department, and center should not be capitalized on second reference. So, “Johns Hopkins University is a big place. The university strives to accomplish big things.”

When capitalizing in course names or publication titles, uppercase is used for all proper names and forms of the verb “to be” (is, are, were, am, etc.), plus:

- Nouns (man, bus, book)
- Adjectives (angry, lovely, small)
- Verbs (run, eat, sleep)
- Adverbs (slowly, quickly, quietly)
- Pronouns (he, she, it)

Catalog, cataloging

Cellphone

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Note the “s” on Centers.

Colon: Capitalize the first word after a colon only if it is a proper noun or the start of a complete sentence. “The only thing holding John back: He couldn’t read.” But, “John had one problem: an inability to read.”

Comma: Use a serial comma (i.e., before and in a series of three or more items), as in the schools of Nursing, Medicine, and Public Health. Note: If a serial comma does not appear in a proper name (Department of Family, Population and Reproductive Health), do not add one.

Community-public health: capitalize when referring to the name of the department, Community-Public Health

Course titles: Do not italicize course titles or use quotation marks. Capitalize where appropriate. Example: Human Growth and Development Through the Lifespan.

Course work

Credentials: When listing academic credentials after a nurse's name, set them off with commas, and begin with the highest attained. So a registered nurse with a master of science in nursing degree who goes on to earn a doctor of nursing practice degree would have a set-up like this: "As it turned out, Joan Jones, DNP, MSN, RN, did have time for small talk, a rarity in her position as a nurse director at Johns Hopkins Hospital." If she has been installed as a fellow of the American Academy of Nurses, it becomes: "Joan Jones, DNP, MSN, RN, FAAN, did have time for small talk on this evening."

Note: There are exceptions, of course (our faculty pages, for one), but we generally don't list further certifications, as it gets too clunky. These certifications, though highly important to the nurse and her/his organization, are often unrecognizable to general readers and even many fellow nurses. If it's essential to let readers know that Joan is a certified nurse midwife, or CNM, don't add the letters to the acronyms behind the name but rather write it as: "One newborn, in particular, could have benefited from this procedure," explained Joan Jones, DNP, MSN, RN, FAAN, a certified nurse midwife."

Data: It's a plural form of the word datum

From the university:

When the word data refers to separate elements, use plural verbs and pronouns: "Data have been collected from many countries." When the word functions as a collective noun, use singular verbs and pronouns: "The data you collected is helpful in this project."

Date: The construction is time (no comma)/day (comma)/date (comma)/year, so: "1 p.m. Saturday, May 6, 2027."

Note: Unless space is limited, do not abbreviate March, April, June, or July, and never abbreviate May unless listing months by letter on a chart or calendar.

Dialogue

DNP vs. PhD: The DNP program prepares nurse leaders for evidence-based practice in both direct patient care and executive roles. This requires competence in translating research, evaluating evidence, applying research in decision-making, and implementing viable clinical and organizational innovations to change practice.

The PhD program is designed to prepare nurses for careers as research scientists, often in academic or governmental positions.

Doctor: Many media outlets recognize only physicians as “doctors” in news articles. In internal communications and nurse-specific publications, “Dr.” may be used as an honorific on second reference for a PhD, DNP, or MD.

e.g.: shorthand meaning “for example.”

Faculty publications: Titles are set off with quotation marks, as in “HIV and STI Testing in Older Adults: an Integrative Review.” When capitalizing titles, uppercase is used for all proper names and forms of the verb “to be” (is, are, were, am, etc.), plus:

- Nouns (man, bus, book)
- Adjectives (angry, lovely, small)
- Verbs (run, eat, sleep)
- Adverbs (slowly, quickly, quietly)
- Pronouns (he, she, it)

Flier: This covers pamphlets, pilots, and passengers. A Flyer plays hockey in Philadelphia or is the brand name of an old-time sled, the Flexible Flyer.

-fold: Write out all numbers: fourfold, tenfold, hundredfold.

Follow-up (noun, adjective), **follow up** (verb)

Full time/part time: She is a full-time instructor; she works full time. Ditto for part time.

Fundraiser, fundraising

Health care: This is university style. Two words unless spelled as one word in the official title of an organization, bill, etc. (like Society for Healthcare Strategy). Do not hyphenate as an adjective.

Henderson-Hopkins school: Formal name is Elmer A. Henderson: A Johns Hopkins Partnership School. It’s a contract school, not a charter school.

Holidays: Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Rosh Hashana, etc. When germane, and if space allows, briefly describe what the holiday means to those who celebrate/mark it.

Home page

Hyphen: From the university ...

Both AP and Chicago prefer a spare hyphenation style. If no suitable example or analogy can be found in either stylebook (AP Punctuation section, under “hyphen” and Chicago 7.85) or in the dictionary, hyphenate only if doing so will aid readability.

- *Hyphenate “and a half” only if used as a compound adjective: one and a half inches, a one-and-a-half-inch hem. Do not hyphenate “then” as an adjective: then Soviet Russia.*
- *Do not hyphenate number + percentage: a 10 percent raise.*
- *Do not hyphenate dollar amount: She signed a 10-year, \$250 million contract.*

- Do not hyphenate certain words, even when used as adjectives: *high school class, health care law.*
- Do not hyphenate “very” and adverbs ending in “ly” (*a highly regarded author, a very good student*).
- When a compound modifier follows a form of the verb “to be,” hyphenate it: *Her work is well-regarded.*

i.e.: shorthand meaning “that is.”

It vs. they/its vs. their: An organization is a singular entity. Put a couple of them together in a string and they are plural. Put many organizations under one umbrella and they become a singular entity.

Examples:

- The Red Cross hopes to increase its supply of blood.
- The Red Cross and other charities hope to increase their donations.
- More than 100 chapters are part of Sigma Theta Tau International, holding its congress this year in South Africa.

Johns Hopkins Health System: The components of the health system are the Johns Hopkins Health System Corp., the Johns Hopkins Hospital, Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, Johns Hopkins Community Physicians, Johns Hopkins Employer Health Programs, Howard County General Hospital, Sibley Memorial Hospital, Suburban Hospital, and Johns Hopkins All Children’s Hospital.

Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions: Sometimes used to refer collectively to the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, the Johns Hopkins Hospital, the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, and the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing.

Johns Hopkins Medicine: Components are the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, the Johns Hopkins Health System Corp., the Johns Hopkins Hospital, Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, Johns Hopkins Community Physicians, Johns Hopkins Employer Health Programs, Howard County General Hospital, Sibley Memorial Hospital, Suburban Hospital, Johns Hopkins All Children’s Hospital, Johns Hopkins HealthCare, the Johns Hopkins Home Care Group and subsidiaries, and Johns Hopkins Medicine International.

Johns Hopkins University/Johns Hopkins Hospital: In general, lowercase the “t” in “the” for the Johns Hopkins Hospital. (One exception allowed is in publications/sections paid for by the hospital nurses.) The preferred shortened name of the university and hospital is “Johns Hopkins” rather than “Hopkins.”

-like: Lifelike, parklike, etc. Hyphenate only if the letter L would be tripled or if the main word is a proper noun: “Johns Hopkins-like.”

Loath, loathe: “Loath” means you’re reluctant to do it for fear you might hate it. “Loathe” means you tried it and hate it.

-long: daylong, weeklong, yearlong. Words with multiple syllables or that might trick the eye or the tongue get a hyphen, as “millennium-long” or “century-long.”

Long-standing, long-term, longtime

-making: Decision making (noun form), the decision-making process, decision-maker. But, policymaking, policymaker and filmmaking, filmmaker.

Manikin: Correct spelling for simulation dummy (not a storefront fashion dummy, which is a “mannequin”).

National Institutes of Health: Note the “s.”

No. 1: AP style uses the abbreviation with a figure to indicate position or rank, with the “N” uppercase for press releases or news publications. Note: At Nursing, we use a hashtag with a numeral for internal communications, social media, or other non-media communication.

Numerals:

- Ages: use numerals.
- Grades: follow AP rules for ordinal numbers (e.g., fifth grade, 12th grade).
- Scores (games, sports): use numerals.
- Use a comma to separate hours and minutes: “Susan Brown Smith completed the race in 3 hours, 45 minutes (not 3 hours and 45 minutes).
- Dimensions, formulas, and speeds: use numerals, like 5 feet 6 inches tall.

Only: Where this word goes in a sentence means everything. “I only want \$2” means that’s all you crave right now. “I want only \$2” means, essentially, “Can you spare it?” “I want \$2 only” means if you can’t break a ten, you’re off the hook on lending me money. From the *U.S. News* stylebook:

- *Only I pushed the new car yesterday.*
- *I only pushed the new car yesterday.*
- *I pushed only the new car yesterday.*
- *I pushed the only new car yesterday,*
- *I pushed the new car only yesterday.*
- *I pushed the new car yesterday only.*

Page numbers: Write out “page” and use figures, as in “Business guru Norm Augustine (interviewed in “Storms in the Economic Forecast,” page 16) offers a prescription for ...”

Peace Corps: The term “returned Peace Corps volunteers” is often abbreviated as RPCVs on second reference. “RCPVs at the School of Nursing are eligible for a Paul D. Coverdell Fellows Scholarship.”

Percent: Write out in text, as in “12 percent.” In headlines, charts, and spreadsheets, “12%” is fine.

Possessives: Three examples to note in Johns Hopkins usage: campus’s, SAIS’, and Johns Hopkins’. (University suggests seeing AP for a complete discussion.)

Pre-: Hyphenate when the compound it creates is not listed in AP or Webster’s or is a proper noun.

- pre-July 4 celebration
- pre-retirement party.

Hyphenate to avoid a double vowel (per AP): pre-existing, pre-eminent, pre-empt, pre-exist. Exception: preeclampsia.

Premier/premiere: Premier is a chief official, the “first ever,” or the “foremost.” Premiere is opening night.

Quotation marks: Periods and commas always go inside quote marks. The colon, semicolon, question mark, and exclamation point go outside when they are not part of the quoted material.

- “Welcome to my nightmare,” said Alice Cooper from a sand trap at Pebble Beach.
- You want a good read? “The Use of Haddon’s Matrix to Plan for Injury and Illness Prevention at Outdoor Music Venues”: It’s got Nobel Peace Prize written all over it.
- I can’t believe that guy actually said, “I didn’t do it”! With all that evidence, can you believe he’d say “not guilty”? ... But, “Why are we doing this?”

Room numbers: Preferred order is room number before the building—217 Pinkard.

School/schools: Uppercase as part of a school’s name, as in School of Nursing, School of Medicine, School of Engineering. But taken together, they are the schools of Nursing, Medicine, and Engineering.

Smartphone

Startup (noun or adjective), **start up** (verb)

Time: Use p.m. and a.m. for evening and morning designations. When listing hours, there is no need to use “:00” after a top-of-the-hour designation. It is simply “1 p.m.” When using all caps, do not use the periods on a.m. or p.m. Use “1 PM SATURDAY.”

Note: If using only the times themselves to list the length of a program, use a hyphen, as in “1 p.m.-3 p.m.” If you feel you need to add “from,” then separate the hours with a “to.” Thus, “... from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.”

Also: 12:01 p.m. is one minute after noon. 12:01 a.m. is one minute after midnight.

type 2 diabetes: Note lowercase “t.”

URL: Although it is not wrong to include the “http://” and “www.” when giving URLs, it is not necessary to do so. If you must break a URL over two lines, try to do it before a slash, a dot, or “at” symbol.

Website, webcam, webcast, webmaster: But Web, Web page, and Web feed. Note: Do not italicize or put in quotes the names of websites.

-wide: In general, no hyphen, as in universitywide, worldwide, citywide.

Workforce