

## Marlboro College publications style guide

*updated November 2014*

It is important that Marlboro College uses a consistent style in all of our publications, either print or online. We use the *Associated Press Stylebook* as our primary source, with *The Chicago Manual of Style* for things that AP doesn't cover well, such as italics and dashes. For spellings we refer to *Webster's New World College Dictionary*. What follows are some of the style issues most often encountered at Marlboro and some exceptions to AP.

**academic degrees:** We follow AP, which says to use lower case for degrees in the general sense: bachelor's degree, master's degree, or doctorate in psychology. Only when a degree is spelled out formally is it capitalized, and the possessive is also dropped: Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts, Bachelor of Science, etc. When abbreviated, however, we follow *Chicago Manual* in capitalizing without periods, as in BA, MS, MAT, or PhD. Avoid using these abbreviations whenever possible, to prevent the appearance of alphabet soup, using instead lower case format above after the first mention.

**acronyms:** Acronyms are also capitalized and with no periods, but avoid using too many for the same alphabet soup reason. Always spell out the full name on first reference, with the abbreviation in parentheses unless it is a very familiar one, like NASA. "The Associated Press sent a journalist to the University of Vermont to learn about their new Collegiate Radicals Against Patriarchy (CRAP) group. The AP journalist filed his CRAP story as soon as she had a quote from I. P. Freely, UVM president."

**alumni:** Alumna and alumnus are the only acceptable references to an individual female or male (respectively) graduate or former student. Do not use alum, which sounds like a mineral and is too informal for a college that teaches classics. Plural is alumni, or alumnae if all females.

**area codes:** Separate area codes with a hyphen, not parentheses: 802-257-4333

**areas of study:** Use lower case for all except proper nouns: English, mathematics, French, basket weaving. The same is true for academic departments.

**boldface:** With a couple exceptions (e.g.: names in *Potash Hill* class notes), never use boldface in narrative sentences unless you want to look like you are a 19th-century advertisement. For titles and subtitles, follow the style for that publication or web page. See italics usage below.

**buildings:** Official names of buildings are capitalized, but more general names are not. "The tour took the prospective students from the dining hall to the campus center to Dalrymple and the Brown Science Building."

**capitals:** Do not overuse capitals, as they tend to make sentences overly grand and unreadable. “Marlboro College President Ellen McCulloch-Lovell collaborated with the Students For the Environment Group to launch a Keep Marlboro College Green Initiative by posting ‘Stay Off The Grass’ signs.” Rather, “Ellen McCulloch-Lovell, president, collaborated with concerned students to launch an environmental initiative to keep the college greener by posting signs reading, ‘stay off the grass.’” Notable exceptions are Town Meeting, Plan of Concentration, and Work Day. See “areas of study,” “buildings,” “committees,” “class years,” and “titles” for more.

**Capstone Project:** The final project of students at the graduate school should be capitalized, just as Plan of Concentration is. “Capstone” is acceptable on a second reference.

**centuries:** Spell out for centuries up to ninth, use numbers with “st,” “nd,” “rd” or “th” after for all others. Make sure these don’t turn into superscripts, which some word processors will do automatically. If used as an adjective, should be hyphenated, but do not hyphenate “early” or “late.” “Although he studied music of the ninth and 10th centuries, he also enjoyed listening to late 20th-century music at top volume.”

**class years:** Use lower case and a single, closing quote apostrophe (’) before the last two digits of the year: “She graduated with the class of ’04.” Many schools use upper case (Class of ’04), but *Webster’s* specifies lower case and many other schools follow this pattern. When naming a student from a given class, use the same guidelines: “Fidel Castro ’62 would have graduated with the class of ’58 if he had not taken time out to focus on his political career.” Word processing programs will sometimes automatically insert a single, beginning quotation mark (‘); be sure to change it. Text that has been imported may have a simple, or “dumb” apostrophe (’); fix this so that it is a “smart” apostrophe that matches the font in use.

**college:** Always lower case when used on its own, despite the inclinations of many. “Marlboro College is embarking on a new international program. The college will airdrop each incoming student to a different corner of the globe with the instructions to get home.”

**commas:** Although Marlboro’s style guide rejected the use of serial commas for many years, much to the chagrin of our more academic readers, our current style follows *Chicago Manual* in including the so-called “Oxford” comma. In a list, put a comma after the last word before “and” or “or:” “My favorite cereals are Fruity Pebbles, Quisp, and Quake.”

**committees:** As much as it pains a certain editor, official, formal names of long-standing committees should be capitalized, such as Committee on Health and Wellness or Environmental Quality Committee. Their use should be kept at a minimum to avoid pompousness. After the first usage, “the committee” or paraphrasing names such as “the health committee” will suffice. An ad hoc committee is not capitalized. “The dean search committee presented their findings to the Academic Integrity Committee.”

**course titles:** Official course titles are capitalized, without quotation marks, italics, or any other formatting. General subject titles are not capitalized. “Of all the math classes he took, Introduction to Isosceles Triangles was his favorite.”

**dates:** January 4, 2001; not January 4th, 2001. Note that an annoying feature of some word processing programs automatically inserts the “th.” Remove it. Put a comma after the day and the year. “Born on January 4, 2001, the two-headed calf grew up to enjoy an illustrious circus career.” If only citing the month, remove the comma: “Born in January 2001.”

**dashes:** Don’t use a dash or a hyphen as a replacement for a preposition. “He attended Marlboro College from 1990 to 2002” (not: from 1990-2002). Use an en dash (alt+hyphen) where “to” is not appropriate, such as when modifying a noun: “the Winter–Spring issue of *Potash Hill*.” Use an em dash (shift+alt+hyphen), with no space before or after, to indicate sudden breaks in a sentence or other uses for emphasis: “Call home only if—heaven forbid—you lose your passport.” Never use a double hyphen in place of an em dash unless you want to--heaven forbid--be bludgeoned with a *Chicago Manual of Style*.

**departments:** Seeing as Marlboro typically has one or two faculty members per area of study, there is rarely a need to refer to departments. When there is, it should be in the general, unofficial sense, in lower case. “Faculty members from the politics and visual arts departments worked together to build effigies of infamous historic figures.”

**ellipses:** Use three dots in the middle of a sentence to indicate a break, where time passed or words were removed. Use four dots to indicate the break ends the sentence: He said of the film, “I hope to...see that...movie again....”

**email:** This word has no hyphen, lower case. “He opened the email from Natasha with trembling fingers.”

**fonts:** Generally for print publications, we use Fournier and Avenir. If you do not have access to these fonts you can substitute the system equivalents Times New Roman and Arial. For help finding fonts, colors in our approved palette, or files with the correct Marlboro College logo, contact Ella at 258-9242 or [emcintosh@marlboro.edu](mailto:emcintosh@marlboro.edu).

**freelance:** Use as one word.

**fulltime:** This is one word when used as an adjective. This is counter to AP. Two words when not an adjective. “He worked at the convenience store full time after being a fulltime student at Marlboro College.” Same goes for part-time, except the adjective is hyphenated.

**graduate school:** Marlboro College Graduate and Professional Studies programs, after the first mention, can be referred to as the “graduate school,” just as Marlboro College

can later be referred to as the “college.” “Marlboro College Graduate and Professional Studies programs are located in downtown Brattleboro. The graduate school is within walking distance of the train station.” The *facility* that houses the graduate school and other upstanding enterprises can be referred to as the Marlboro College Graduate Center, or just “the graduate center.” It should never be called the Marlboro College Technology Center. There is no need to use Marlboro College Graduate and Professional Studies when simply Marlboro College is appropriate and gives a more cohesive impression.

**graduate programs:** The seven programs offered by Marlboro through the graduate center should be consistently referred to by the same titles: MA in Teaching for Social Justice (MATS), MA in Teaching with Technology (MAT), MBA in Managing for Sustainability (MBA), MS in Management–Mission-Driven Organizations (MSM-MDO), MS in Management–Health Care Administration (HCA), MA in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (MA TESOL), and the BS in Management completion program (BSM) (?). After referring to them by their full title, you can use their acronyms or, better, “the program,” “this master’s program,” etc.

**health care:** This is always two words, regardless of how it is used. The health care debate had little to do with health care.

**internet:** It is acceptable, finally, to not capitalize this word. Yay. See World Wide Web below.

**italics:** Use italics for names of published works of a substantial length, such as the names of newspapers, magazines, books, movies, plays. If the title is part of something larger, such as a short story in a magazine, a poem in a collection, or the episode of a television show, use quotations. “In the ‘Coconut Colonoscopy’ episode of *Gilligan’s Island*, Gilligan gets a surprise from the Professor on his 50th birthday.” Italicize foreign words or phrases that are not in *Webster’s*, or are italicized therein, ie. *campesino* but not cappuchino. Also use italics for any use of “Latin” binomial species names, but not names at other taxonomic levels. “The slimy weasel, *Mustela phlegmata*, is in the weasel family, Mustelidae.”

**majors:** There are no majors at Marlboro College, unless you are referring to a “major crush,” “major geek,” or the like. Generally, we refer to areas of study and sometimes degree fields.

**months:** These should always be spelled out, and not abbreviated. Even on the website.

**numbers:** Spell out numbers one through nine, and use numerals for 10 and above. Ages are the main exception: always use a numeral, even for those under 10. “The 3-year-old boy pooped in his diaper four times today.” The other exception is percentages, which are numerals followed by the word “percent,” not the symbol that looks like a pair of glasses someone stepped on.

**Plan of Concentration:** Always capitalize this. Spell out on first reference, “Plan” acceptable on second reference.

**Potash Hill:** Always capitalized, just like Mount Everest. When referring to the publication, it should also be italicized.

**quotation marks:** Text that is imported from emails or html will sometimes bear quotations marks that are “dumb,” or do not match the font, as “smart” quotation marks do. They look something like this (") rather than this (“), and when you have both in the same document, let alone the same sentence, it looks...well, *dumb*, hence the name. This can usually be fixed by merely retyping the punctuation mark in the proper font. The same can be said for “dumb” apostrophes.

**semester:** Semesters and seasons are all lowercase. “During spring semester 2008, students went to Las Vegas for spring break to participate in the rites of spring.”

**slashes:** Putting a slash between words means “either/or.” “These guidelines are for all print/online publications.”

**spaces:** Do not use double spaces after sentences, as we did in the old days with typewriters. Variable width fonts made this obsolete years ago, so double spaces actually look twice as big and quite goofy.

**state names:** Spell these out; don’t abbreviate.

**state universities:** Always use “the” before state university names, and follow their own convention for designating their different campuses. “The University of Maine at Augusta,” but also “The University of Massachusetts Amherst” and “University of Connecticut – Avery Point.”

**students:** Do not capitalize freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior, even if it is before a student’s name. “When senior Lawrence Whelk presented his Plan of Concentration on mollusks, mostly freshmen and sophomores were there.”

**theater:** We are not amongst English folks. Don’t spell it “theatre.”

**time:** Use a space between the time and the a.m. or p.m., lower case, with periods.

**titles, professional:** Following AP and Chicago styles, official position titles should only be capitalized in running text when they immediately precede the individual’s name. When they are a more general job description, or follow a name and comma in running text, they are never capitalized. “Marlboro College President Ellen McCulloch-Lovell hosted a rousing game of charades, joined by Stan Charkey, music professor, Brenda Foley, theater professor, artist Malcolm Wright, and writer Philip Johansson.” The only other time to capitalize job titles is in display format, such as in a list of people, even if they appear after their names.

**titles, work:** Generally, work titles should be headline style, capitalizing all important words, unless they are being listed, as in a bibliography, or especially long, in which case they should be in sentence style. “The author of *The Rise and Fall of the Nabisco Dynasty* gave a lecture titled, ‘Made made by elves: The uncommonly good business practices of Keebler Foods Company.’” If a colon is used, the first and second portions of the title should be the same style, as in the latter example. If a compound word is used in headline style, the word following the hyphen should be capitalized in most cases. There is some leeway of course, in terms of typesetting and design, for titles of articles in *Potash Hill* and other publications.

**Town Meeting:** When referring to Marlboro College’s Town Meeting, capitalize. When referring to other town meetings, lower case.

**underlining:** Never underline. See italics usage above or in *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

**Work Day:** Capitalize when referring to the official Work Day each semester (Same as Hendricks day in honor of Jimi and Ragle Day in honor of those round, doughy breads with holes), as opposed to a more impromptu “work day.”

**World Wide Web:** Capitalize when using full name, a proper noun, but use lower case when just referred to as “the web” same as you would call Marlboro College “the college.” Use lowercase to refer to website (one word), webmaster (also one word), etc.

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