**AP Stylebook O–Z** **Editing and Publishing** 2/14/19

**O**

* obscenities: Usually, in quoted matter or in the names of certain rock groups, use first letter of word followed by one hyphen for each letter. Some papers use an em-dash for the rest of the word.
* off of = off (he fell off the counter) [and “based off of” should be “based on”]
* OK: in a departure from dictionary style, this is OK.
* on: Generally do not use with days or dates. They will meet Tuesday. Use before proper noun to avoid confusion (He will meet Billy on Sunday).
* oral: Meaning “spoken.” Verbal refers to communication using words, or to words in general (both oral and written). They came to an oral agreement.
* over, more than: Another landmark change; it’s now OK to use “over” and “more than” interchangeably: The crop was valued at over $5 billion.

**P**

* page numbers: Capital P with numerals: It was on Page 5 [recall: No. 1 choice]
* palate (roof of the mouth); palette (artist’s mixing board); pallet (wooden sleeping platform).
* party affiliation: when possible, use the short form: Sen. Bob Casey, D-Pa., talked to Rep. Madeleine Dean, D-Philadelphia. Note that within a state, you can use the name of the district, but for other states, use Rep. Mike McIntyre, D-N.C.
* passers-by
* pedal your bicycle until it is getting old, then peddle it at a yard sale.
* Pennsylvania is abbreviated Pa. (not Penn.) when used in a dateline. Recall how people pronounce it (He’s from Pittsburgh, P-A.).
* people, person. People is the plural form of person. Don’t use persons unless it’s in an official title (Bureau of Missing Persons).
* percent: Use figures, even if less than 10. Q: If interest rates went from 6 percent to 8 percent they went up how much? A: two percentage points, but 33 percent. (Don’t use “%” unless in a chart or graphic.)
* Photoshop
* Ph.D.: Say that someone has a doctorate (n.), or a doctoral (adj.) degree. Use Ph.D. in title form only (John Beatty, Ph.D., will speak tonight on ...). Don’t refer to someone with a Ph.D. as doctor (use that for medical doctors only). [Q: What does Ph.D. stand for?]
* pica = 1/6/ inch (approx.); = 12 points.
* planets: Caps. Also for Earth (but not in the sense of soil). This is the best restaurant on Earth. But he enjoys tilling the good earth.
* plants (and all biological binominals): Uppercase the genus, lowercase species and subspecies: Homo sapiens, Tyrannosaurus rex, Aedes aegypti and so on. Many publications italicize them.
* Plexiglas: proper name, cap, one “s.”
* plurals: Should know most of these. DON’T add apostrophe before “s.” Watch names ending in “es” (add es: keeping up with the Joneses); numbers (no apostrophe: the 1960s, but the ’50s); single letters do add the apostrophe (mind your P’s and Q’s. Again, it would be confusing to write: The Penn State offensive line got straight As.)
* p.m. (and never 8 p.m. tonight).
* political philosophies: Use caps for a specific party but not for a philosophy unless it derives from a proper noun: The Russian Communist party; communism and democracy; Marxism; He was a communist for the FBI.
* polls: At a minimum, report the sample size and margin of error. Smith leads Jones by 52 to 38 percent (plus or minus 3 percentage points).
* pore over this handout but don’t pour coffee on it.
* possessives: most words ending in “s” just add an apostrophe. Exception: singular common nouns ending in s (and usually ss) add apostrophe plus s: the boss’s orders. No S added for proper nouns: James’ book. Relative pronouns never add S: its theirs his hers. Joint possessives: add apostrophe S to second name only for joint possession: Bill and Ted’s adventure. Descriptive phrases: No S: teachers college; boys soccer team, farmers market. Quasi possessives: Add apostrophe S: An hour’s pay; a day’s work.
* post office: Now the U.S. Postal Service.
* pre-: Generally, no hyphen unless it’s before an E: pre-election. [Food guidelines now say to avoid the term “preheat”: Heat the oven to 350 F. George Carlin would approve.]
* predominantly: not predominately.
* premier, premiere: This food is of premier quality. She attended the play’s premiere.
* president: Cap only before a name: Former President Jimmy Carter; President Donald Trump. But the pope is in Rome. Second reference use last name: President Trump.
* principal: First in rank or importance: He is the school principal. He is the principal official.
* principle: a truth or doctrine: Appeal to first principles in your argument. Principles of Editing
* Procter and Gamble: Not Proctor
* professor: Don’t abbreviate as “prof”. Lowercase before a name: This is professor Kathleen Olson.
* prostate gland: Not prostrate

**Q**

* questionnaire: Not questionaire.
* quotations: AP says never correct even for minor errors in usage. Most papers do that to give people the benefit of the doubt (did they say gonna or going to?). Don’t make one person seem less “educated” through use of quotes incorporating clipped speech, etc. (gonna, wanna, eatin’). Avoid partial quotes.
* Quran: not Koran

**R**

* race: Use only when pertinent. Use for suspect at large but not for arrested individuals.
* rack: He racked his brain (torture rack) (v.). Wrack and ruin. (n.) But she wracked her brain has “substantially the same meaning” as rack, which is the preferred one.
* ranges: E.g. $12 million to $14 million, not $12 to $14 million [Q: What does that mean?]
* ratio: The bill was defeated by a 2-to-1 ratio. Margin is the actual number of votes (It lost by a margin of 224 to 112).
* re-: As with pre- hyphenate if followed by E: re-elect.
* recipes: Always use figure: Boil for 2 minutes. Serves 4.
* reddit: The social media site; subreddits
* reign, rein: Watch the cliches: To give free rein to ( as in riding); a reign of terror (as in ruling).
* religious references: Caps for proper name of monotheistic deities: God, Buddha and denominations: She is a Catholic with catholic tastes. Don’t capitalize pronouns (his word).Lowercase heaven, hell.
* religious titles: the Rev. Billy Graham on first reference, Graham after that
* restaurateur: Not restauranteur.
* rock ’n’ roll but Rock and Roll Hall of Fame

**S**

* Scots: The people of Scotland are Scots or Scottish people, not Scotch (whisky).
* seasons: Lowercase.
* self-: Hyphenate: Self-esteem.
* sentences: Capitalize with full sentence quotes: He said, “How are you doing?” Also capitalize after a colon if what follows is a full sentence.
* she: Do not use in references to ships or nations. Use “it.”
* skiing.
* Smokey Bear: Not Smokey the Bear.
* social media: There is a new section just for these tools. Watch odd spellings/trademarks: YouTube, but Myspace [note that it is a plural, so, “Social media have become very important.”]
* south: She came from the South. He drove south.
* Spanish names: Generally use three names, but second reference uses the second (father’s family) name. [Chinese names put family name first. Yao Ming …Yao had 12 rebounds]
* speeds: Use figures: He rode his bike at 7 mph.
* stanch (v.), staunch(adj.)
* state of: We live in the state of Pennsylvania.
* states: The abbreviations (note Calif., Conn., Pa., Wis., La., Okla., Mich. Ill.) are used now only in datelines. Not abbreviated: Those fewer than six letters, plus Hawaii, Alaska. Washington state (not State, used for the university). If it’s an address or ZIP code, use that style PA, CA, etc.
* stationery: A type of paper. Stationary bicycle.
* Styrofoam: A trademark, capped.
* supersede: Not supercede.

**T**

* teachers college.
* teenager, teenage. Change from recent style. Don’t use teen-aged.
* telephone numbers. Now they’re 212-621-1500. Used to be (212) 621-1500
* temperatures: Use figures except for zero.
* that: When in doubt use it. Use “which” for non-essential clauses: The book, which is red, was on the shelf. Use who, whom for people and animals with names: The students who were present received good grades.
* theater: But a lot of places spell it Schubert Theatre so you have to use that.
* their vs. they’re vs. there. They’re = they are.
* 3‑D.
* time element: Generally, don’t use today. Don’t use tomorrow, yesterday unless in quotes. Can use today for events later in the day: The concert will be at 5 p.m. today. Use dates for days past or for days more than seven days in the future: We will meet again Wednesday, Friday and November 11.
* times: Use figures. Use noon or midnight since 12 a.m. is not well-known.
* titles: Caps if formal title before a name. Most papers do not use courtesy titles. In The New York Times it’s Mr. Loaf.
* toward: Not towards (recall backward).
* trans-: Generally no hyphen, but trans-Atlantic.
* troop: For groups of people, e.g. scout troop.
* troupe: For performers.
* trusty: Prison inmate given special privileges (a favorite on editing tests).
* TV: Acceptable as an adjective or noun.

**U**

* ukulele: Not ukelele.
* Ukraine; not “the Ukraine,” a term left over from the Soviet era when Ukraine was considered merely a region as in “the plains”; you would not say “the France”
* underway: Now one word in all uses.
* United Kingdom: Wales, Scotland, England (those three are in Great Britain) and Northern Ireland. Ireland is not in the U.K.
* U.N.: As an adjective or noun. (UN in headlines)
* U.S.: As an adjective or noun. (US in headlines)
* -up: Note common words such as lineup, but frame-up.
* upward: Not upwards, as before.

**V**

* vacuum: Not vaccuum.
* versus: Always vs.
* vice: e.g. vice president, no hyphen.
* Vietnam: Not Viet Nam (change from earlier usage).

**W**

* Walmart. The company changed its logo and store name and eventually its company name to Walmart
* war: Capitalize as part of a specific event: the Vietnam War, the Gulf War.
* website: a “high-profile change.” But the Web, a Web page.
* weights: Use figures (as with dimensions): a 7-pound baby.
* well: Hyphenate as part of a compound modifier or after forms of “to be”. Well-made shoes are hard to find. It was a well-known rule. That is a little-known fact. [Q: Why?].
* when, where: [Not in AP]. Don’t use “where” to refer to time. NOT: “In an era where satisfaction is low …” .
* whiskey, but Scotch whisky.
* who, whom: Use whom for direct object Try replacing by him or her, or he or she: Everyone would stand up to someone who won’t hurt them (he won’t hurt them). The woman and the man whom she had seen (she had seen him).
* who’s, whose: As with their/they’re, whose book is this? who’s = who is.
* width: See dimensions. A 3-inch-wide stick.
* -wise: Generally no hyphen: clockwise. Avoid making up forms such as: moneywise, he’s badly off.
* women: Avoid use as adjective/noun in apposition: women writers (we wouldn’t say men writers. But it’s used by many female organizations.)
* words as words: Use quotation marks: Don’t use a hyphen in “clockwise.”

**XYZ**

* Xerox: Trademark. Use photocopy if possible.
* Yahoo (although it used to be Yahoo! and that’s what they prefer)
* years: No apostrophe for periods of time: The 1900s; the ’60s. Don’t spell out at start of sentence (only exception to rule: He was tall. Seven feet tall. 1999 was the year).
* YouTube
* ZIP code (acronym for Zoning Improvement Plan); Allentown PA 18104.