



STYLE GUIDE

FOR WRITING AND PUBLISHING

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ESSENTIAL PUNCTUATION RULES FOR ALL OLLI PUBLICATIONS

- The organization's name is OLLI@UGA. Use full name on first reference. For subsequent references use only OLLI.

- The Tuesday Lunch & Learn class uses an ampersand (not the word “and”) with spaces before and after the ampersand.
- The OLLI building is named River’s Crossing (apostrophe in River’s).
- Enclose titles of OLLI programs (classes, Lunch & Learns, travel, social events) in quotation marks.
- In a series of three or more elements, use the “Chicago” or “Oxford” comma (a comma before the final “and”). (Ex.: *red, black, blue, and green. She gave him an apple, an orange, and a pear.*)

NAMES, CAPITALIZATION OF OLLI STAFF AND MEMBERS, AND OLLI GROUPS AND OFFICERS

- Members and staff of OLLI: On first reference, use full name. On subsequent references, use only first name. (Ex.: *Tim Meehan, OLLI executive director, said* or *Tim said. Mary Smith, chair of the Lunch Bunch SIG, said* or *Mary said.*)
- Capitalize OLLI Advisory Council (the OLLI member leadership team). Capitalize title of Advisory Council officer if it precedes name of officer. (Ex.: *OLLI Advisory Council Chair Sue Smith.*) Lower case if title follows name. (Ex.: *Sue Smith, chair of the OLLI Advisory Council.*)
- Capitalize names of OLLI committees. (Ex.: *Curriculum Committee*)
- Shared Interest Groups (SIGs): On first reference, spell out name of group followed by (SIG). (Ex.: *She is chair of the Happy Hikers Shared Interest Group (SIG).*) For subsequent references use only SIG. (Ex.: *The Happy Hikers SIG meets each Monday.*)
- Capitalize title of a committee officer if it precedes name of officer. (Ex.: *Curriculum Committee Chair Mary Black.*) Lower case title if following name of officer. (Ex.: *Mary Black, chair of the Curriculum Committee*)
- Do not capitalize seasonal designation of semesters.(Ex.: *spring semester, fall semester.*) Do capitalize Dartmouth Summer Lecture Series.

CAPITALIZATION OF NON-OLLI NAMES, TITLES, ENTITIES

- On first reference, for people with civil, military, religious, political, professional and other titles, use full name and capitalize title if it functions as part of the name. (Ex.: *Athens Police Chief Sam Smith, First Methodist Church Minister Rev. Joan Jones, UGA Athletic Director Bob Johnson*. On subsequent reference, use only last name and no title. Ex.: *Smith, Jones, Johnson*.)
- On first reference, lower case titles that do not function as part of the name. (Ex.: *Sam Smith, chief of the Athens Police Department; Rev. Joan Jones, minister of First Methodist Church; Bob Johnson, UGA athletic director*.) On subsequent reference, use only last name and no title.
- If a professor holds an endowed chair or special professorship, capitalize the full name of the title. (Ex.: *Jane Black, Dudley Professor of Academic Law*.)
- Titles with more than four words should be lower case and after the name. (Ex.: *Sue Brown, director of the finance department*.) Generic titles should not be capitalized. (Ex.: *The director will meet with chairs of committees*.)
- Capitalize names of all UGA buildings, even those with generic names. (Ex.: *Zell Miller Student Learning Center, LeConte Hall, Physics Building*.)
- Capitalize full, formal names of all schools and colleges. (Ex.: *Franklin College of Arts and Sciences, Hodgson School of Music*.) DO NOT capitalize academic divisions, departments or sequences within schools and colleges. (Ex.: *division of biological sciences in the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences; department of reading education in the Mary Frances Early College of Education*.)
- Capitalize full, formal names of centers and institutes on first reference and lower case on subsequent reference. (Ex.: *Institute of Higher Learning and the institute; Complex Carbohydrate Research Center and the center*.)

- Capitalize formal names of campus organizations. (Ex.: *University Council, Interfraternity Council.*)
- Do not capitalize season of the year: winter, spring, summer, fall.

TECHNOLOGY AND SOFTWARE USE

- email – no hyphen
- internet – lower case “i”)
- artificial intelligence – Spell out on first usage, then use “AI” without periods on subsequent use.
- Zoom – Capitalize as a proper noun. (Ex.: *We used Zoom for the meeting.*) Avoid using as a verb (“*we zoomed*”); instead say “*had a video call*” or “*had a Zoom meeting.*”
- Google – Always capitalize. Avoid using as a generic term; instead use “*internet search*” or as a verb (“*I Googled.*”) “*Googled*” or “*Googling*” are acceptable if Google is the platform used for searching.

PUBLICATION NAMES AND TITLES

- Do NOT italicize names of newspapers, magazines and journals. Do NOT capitalize the word “the” that precedes the name. (Ex.: the Athens Banner-Herald, the New Yorker Magazine, the Journal of Applied Psychology.)
- Enclose in quotation marks (“...”) names of books; names of movies; names of songs; names of television and radio programs; names of art exhibitions and other gallery displays; names of paintings and other art works; names of ships and other crafts; titles of short stories; names of poems; titles of articles in newspapers, magazines, and journals; book chapters; and titles of lectures and speeches.
- Lower case articles (a, an, the) and prepositions (in, of) in titles of publications, movies, books, etc., unless they appear at the beginning of the title. (Ex.: “Singing in the Rain,” “The Old Man and the Sea.”)

- *Italicize* legal cases; species names; foreign words and phrases and their translations and definitions; letters that stand for words (e.g., *i.e.*).
- Websites and titles of book series should NOT be italicized or in quotation marks.

ACADEMIC DEGREES

- Use an apostrophe for bachelor's and master's degrees. (Ex.: He has a bachelor's degree in chemistry. She has master's degrees in English and history.)
- Generally, spell out degrees, but if an abbreviation is used, do not use periods (except for Ph.D.), and specify the discipline. (Ex.: BS in chemistry. MA in English.)
- Doctorate is a noun. Doctoral is an adjective. Someone has a doctorate in history or a doctoral degree in history, but not a doctorate degree. Generally, avoid Ph.D. to refer to a doctoral degree, but if used, specify the discipline and use periods: Ph.D. in geology.
- For all degrees, specify the academic discipline: a bachelor's degree in chemistry; a master's degree in public health; a doctorate in English.
- Generally, do not use "Dr." before a name except for those with a medical or veterinary medicine degree. (A faculty member not in a medical or veterinary medicine field is assumed to have the terminal (highest) degree in her/his academic discipline, which usually is a doctorate).

ALUMNI

- alumni – plural for two or more male and/or female graduates. (Ex.: *John and Mary are alumni of UGA. John and Sam are alumni of UGA. Mary and Sue are alumni of UGA. They are alumni of UGA.*)
- alumna – a single female graduate. (Ex.: *Mary is an alumna of UGA.*)
- alumnus – a single male graduate. (Ex.: *John is an alumnus of UGA.*)

- alumnae – more than one female graduate. (Ex.: *Mary, Sue and Jane are alumnae of UGA.*) Alumna, alumnus and alumnae can be confusing. Better to just use “graduate” or “graduates” of UGA.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Do not capitalize when used for other organizations. (Ex.: *She serves on the board of directors of the Athens Rotary Club. The Athens Rotary Club board of directors voted yes.*)
- Same rule applies for “board of trustees,” “board of managers,” etc.

DATES, TIMES

- Spell out months and days with just the number, no superscript prefix. (Ex.: *January 12, 2026. Monday, January 12.*)
- In running text with full date, comma must follow day and month. (Ex.: *The program is scheduled for Saturday, January 30, 2026.*) If day and year are not mentioned, no comma after month. (Ex.: *The program is scheduled for January 29 and 30.*)
- For multiple years, use “s” but no apostrophe, or spell out. (Ex.: *1990s or the nineties.*)
- Do not capitalize “century.” (Ex.: *third century, 21st century*)
- Express hour in numerals and use period in “a.m.” and “p.m.” (Ex.: *1 a.m., 4:30 p.m.*) For time spans, use hyphen. (Ex.: *1-4 p.m. Tuesday; 1 a.m. Tuesday-4 p.m. Wednesday; Saturday 6 a.m.-8 p.m.*)

ETHNIC/GENDER REFERENCES

- Do not use hyphen for African American, Asian American, Mexican American, Native American and other ethnicities.
- If color is necessary when referring to an ethnic group, capitalize Black people, but lower case white and brown people. Capitalize indigenous names: Native American, Micronesian.

- If you know that a person prefers gender-neutral pronouns, or if the person requests them, use “they” or “their” or “them” in place of “he/she” or “him/her.”

GEOGRAPHICAL NOUNS AND ADJECTIVES

- Capitalize nouns denoting regions of the world or a particular country. (Ex.: *the South, the Midwest, the North Atlantic.*)
- Lower case adjectives and nouns pertaining to the geographic region of a country. (Ex.: *southern plains, southeastern states, northern seacoast, northwestern mountains, southerner, northerner.*)
- Spell out names of American states when no city or county is used. (Ex.: *He lives in Georgia.*)
- When city or county is specified, abbreviate name of American state using two-letter postal code preceded by comma. (Ex.: *She lives in Tampa, FL. His home is in Wilson County, NC.*)
- If city or county is geographically close to Athens, state designation is not necessary. (Ex.: *He lives in Winder. They have a house in Barrow County. He worked in Atlanta.*)
- For other countries, spell out names of city and country. (Ex.: *He studied in France. He came from Stuttgart, Germany.*) If city name is familiar, country designation is unnecessary. (Ex.: *He studied in Paris. He lived in Berlin.*)

NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES

- Spell out numbers from zero to nine. (Ex.: *He has two apples.*)
- Use numerals for numbers 10 and above (unless the number starts a sentence). (Ex.: *He harvested 17 apples. Seventeen apples are in the basket. The boy is five years old.*) Exception: Use numerals for people, animals, and things, even for numbers under 10, and when used as a noun or as an adjective before a noun. (Ex.: *The 5-year-old girl found a toy. He picked up the 15-pound rock.*)

- For numbers above 999, use commas to designate increments above one thousand. (Ex.: 1,300; 27,300; 527,300.)
- For numbers above 999,999, use numerals followed by words for million, billion, and higher denominations (Ex.: 5.26 million; 70.3 billion; 600 trillion).
- Express percentages in numerals and use % symbol. (Ex.: 12%, not *12 percent*.)
- Spell out simple fractions using hyphen. (Ex.: *two-thirds*.)

SOME PUNCTUATION AND USAGE RULES

- Most adverbs ending in “ly” are not followed by a hyphen, even when they modify a noun or verb. (Ex.: *a locally owned store, a highly intelligent girl, a rapidly moving car, a thoughtfully written note*.)
- To make a name or singular noun that ends in “s” possessive, add an apostrophe s. (Ex.: *I have James’s book. The bus’s tire blew out*.)
- To make plural nouns possessive, just add an apostrophe. (Ex.: *the boys’ bedroom is messy. The dogs’ fur is soft*.)
- When referring to a family, do not use an apostrophe. (Ex.: *the Smiths, the Andersons*.)
- “More than” is used to describe amount and “over” is used to describe physical position. (Ex.: *He had more than 100 books. The collection totals more than \$100. The dishes are stacked over the table. The picture hangs over the sofa*.)
- “Few/fewer” refers to countable things and “less” refers to amounts. (Ex.: *He received fewer than 10 votes. She had fewer than 10 flowers. The bucket held less than a gallon of water. The snake was less than a foot long*.)
- “Who” refers to a person. “That” refers to a non-person. (Ex.: *They are players who made the team. Here is a chair that I bought*.) Often “who” and “that” can be omitted.

- “etc.” or “et cetera” means “other things.” Do not use when referring to people.
- Use an em dash (—), equivalent to three hyphens, to denote an abrupt change in thought or an emphatic pause. (Ex.: *Through her long reign, the queen has adapted—usually skillfully—to the changing times.*) Use a hyphen (-) to indicate ranges of numbers, dates or time. (Ex.: *There were 15-20 people present. The program will be held Monday-Friday of this week. She will speak 1-3:30 p.m.*)
- Use a single space after a period, question mark or exclamation point at the end of a sentence. (Ex.: *The director gave a speech on Monday. He provided information about new membership benefits. Suddenly, she screamed, “No! I won’t go.”*)

SPELLING OF SOME FREQUENTLY USED WORDS

- fundraising, nonprofit, waitlist, reschedule, cyberspace, workplace, healthcare
- toward (not towards)
- a lot (not “alot”)
- whether (not “whether or not”)

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