

## Associated Press Style in a Nutshell

Below are the most important rules you must keep in mind when writing in AP Style

- Write the title in normal English-language capitalization. Never all in caps.
- Add your byline below the article title.
- Do not format the text in the article (only exceptions are: bullet comments and numbered paragraphs in a section that details a process or sequence).
- Do not indent the first line of a paragraph.
- Use AP Style rules for punctuation.
- Single space the article. At the end of each paragraph, execute two end-of lines (Enter key).
- Do not introduce artificial paragraphing by hitting the Enter key at the end of each line in your article. Instead, let the text wrap naturally and insert two Enter keys at the end of the paragraph.
- Use only a single space after a period.
- Use a dateline at the beginning of the article.
- Answer the 5Ws: Who, What, Where, When, Why + the honorary W: How. In writing a CAP article, you will always know the Ws.
- Write all dates in AP style.
- Do not use postal codes instead of state abbreviations (not OK but Okla., not NM but N.M.) but some states have no abbreviation, such as Texas or Ohio.
- Write all CAP and military grades in AP style.
- Write the article in the third person singular.
- Express no personal opinion.
- To express opinion, use one or more quotes of qualified sources – always get the quoted person’s permission to include the quote, unless it is a matter of record (printed article or recorded audio-visual).
- Never self-quote.
- Identify all persons by grade or title, name, job title if material, and organization.
- Never refer to a young person as “kid.”
- When a young person is a CAP cadet, never use “boy,” “girl” or “child” but identify each one by grade, full name (or last name only – never first name only), and unit of assignment.
- Never use “their” for the possessive of a singular subject, such as, “the cadet took their meal.”
- Avoid the abbreviations i.e. and e.g. You may know what each one means, and the Latin words they represent, but most people confuse the two. Be clear. Write in English and leave Latin and non-English to scholars.
- Refer to CAP members by grade, name, duty position and unit of assignment. Never by the first name.
- On second or subsequent references, use only the last name, except when there are two persons with the same last name, in which case the use of both first and last name is preferred (never just the first names).

- In the case of CAP or military commanders or higher ranking senior members, on second reference use the grade and last name.
- Do not use Lt. as a grade. Lt. is a mode of address. The correct grade may be 2nd Lt. or 1st Lt., but never Lt. The only service that has a Lt. grade is the Navy.
- Do not use exclamation marks, as doing so expresses your personal opinion.
- Use simple declarative sentences.
- Avoid the passive voice.
- Remember the good rules of English grammar and syntax, and follow them.
- FOR BEST RESULTS, buy the latest copy of the Associated Press Stylebook, available at a modest cost at [www.ap.org](http://www.ap.org) , read it, study it, and know it.