AAUW Style Basics

AAUW Style Basics sets the standards for AAUW's print and web publications. Use this guide to determine usage, distinctive spelling, and word preferences.

If the word or guideline you're seeking is not listed, first check the most recent editions of the Associated Press *Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law* and then *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. *AAUW Style Basics* takes precedence over all other resources.

Although usage consistency is desirable across all AAUW entities, this style guide is mandatory only for national office staff.

The guide is available on the web. For national office staff, it is also available on SharePoint and on the R drive under Publications.

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AAUW Style and Usage	
AAUW corporations	Use AAUW in documents and publications for AAUW members. If your audience is unfamiliar with AAUW, use "American Association of University Women (AAUW)" at the first mention and AAUW thereafter. Do not use "the" before AAUW or put periods between the letters. Use AAUW Action Fund or the Action Fund for our 501(c)(4) entity. The AAUW Educational Foundation no longer exists. Use the name only in reference to the past. The AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund is a program of AAUW. See "Programs, funds, and themes."
AAUW Bylaws	Capitalize but do not italicize the name: AAUW Bylaws. Do not use initial capital letters for the word "bylaws" when you are using it alone.
Address	Always write the national office address as follows: 1111 Sixteenth St. NW, Washington, DC 20036.
Awards	Breaking through Barriers Award Eleanor Roosevelt Fund Award Women of Distinction Award
Board of directors	Use initial caps when writing the complete formal name: AAUW Board of Directors. Do not use initial caps in any other case: the AAUW board, the board.
Branches and states	Write AAUW of [state]: AAUW of Oregon. Using the following format for branches: AAUW McLean (VA) Branch. Do not use an initial cap if you use the word "branch" by itself in a sentence: The branch officers voted to support the conference.
Chair	Use "chair," not chairman, chairwoman, or chairperson.
Committees and task forces	Use initial caps only when writing the formal name of the committee or task force: AAUW Public Policy Committee, the committee, AAUW of Florida Diversity Task Force, the task force.
Connect2AAUW	Formerly known as Helpline. For the e-mail address, use connect@aauw.org.

Conventions and conferences	AAUW National Convention Write the following: 2011 AAUW National Convention, 2011 National Convention, the 2011 AAUW convention, 2011 convention, the convention, the national convention, the AAUW convention in Washington, D.C. Use initial caps for convention themes and presentation titles but do not format them in bold or italic or use quotation marks: The theme of the 2009 conference was Expanding a Legacy of Leadership. National Conference for College Women Student Leaders For a shorter version, use "student leadership conference" or NCCWSL (spell out at first mention). Use initial caps for conference themes and presentation titles but do not format them in bold or italic or use quotation marks: The theme of the 2008 conference was Summit on Sexual Harassment.
Fellowships and grants	Use initial caps for the formal title only: American Fellowship, Career Development Grant, Community Action Grant, International Fellowship, Selected Professions Fellowship Panel, American and International fellowships, fellowships, grants. Fellows: Use initial caps only when using the formal title: American Fellow, fellow, former fellow.
Leadership Corps	AAUW Leadership Corps, the Leadership Corps
Lobby Corps	AAUW Action Fund Capitol Hill Lobby Corps, Lobby Corps
Members	Don't use initial caps: branch member, national member (not MAL) college/university partner, 50-year life member, honorary life member, paid life member, student affiliate, branch student affiliate, e-student affiliate. Do not use "member-at-large" or MAL.
Membership	More than 100,000 members and donors, 1,000 branches, and 500 college and university partners nationwide.
National office	Use "national office" to designate the AAUW headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Officer and staff titles	Use initial caps only when the title immediately precedes the person's name: AAUW President Carolyn Garfein, AAUW Executive Director Linda Hallman. Do not use initial caps following the person's name, except in event program books or letter signatures: Carolyn Garfein, AAUW president; Christy Jones, director of membership. Do not hyphenate positions beginning with "vice": vice president, vice chair.
Programs, funds, and themes	Do not use bold, italics, or quotation marks. Spell out formal names in the first reference. AAUW Campus Action Project, CAP after first use, the project AAUW college/university partner member program, C/U program, the program AAUW Funds AAUW Keys to the Future: A Member-Get-a-Member Campaign, Member-Get-a-Member campaign, the campaign AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund, Legal Advocacy Fund, LAF AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund Legal Resource Referral Network, LAF Legal Resource Referral Network, LAF network, the network AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund Online Resource Library, LAF online resource library, LAF resource library AAUW Student Advisory Council, Student Advisory Council, SAC AAUW Voter Education Campaign, voter education campaign, the campaign ¡Adelante! Book of the Month Club, book of the month club, the club Breaking through Barriers (internal) Breaking through Barriers for Women and Girls (external) Educational Opportunities Fund Eleanor Roosevelt Fund, the fund Elect Her–Campus Women Win, Elect Her after first use Give a Grad a Gift program Leadership Programs Fund Program in a Box Public Policy Fund Shape the Future membership campaign, the campaign $tart $mart salary negotiation workshops Two-Minute Activist Women-to-Woman Voter Turnout Campaign, the campaign

Publications	Use italics for composition titles.
	AAUW Outlook *LAF Express* *LAF Update* *AAUW Mission & Action, Mission & Action* *AAUW Washington Update, Washington Update* Research publications: In the first reference, cite the full name. After that, you may use shorter titles.
Resolutions	Always lowercase.
ShopAAUW	No space between Shop and AAUW.

General Style and Usage	
Spelling, capitalization, hyphenation	acknowledgment
	adviser (not advisor, unless someone's specific title)
	anti-choice (do not use pro-life)
	Capitol Hill, nation's capital
	chair (do not use chairman, chairwoman, chairperson)
	chat room
	CD-ROM
	child care (adjective is child-care)
	coeducational
	co-host
	co-sponsor
	co-worker
	decision maker
	database
	desktop
	dot-com
	download
	e-mail (noun and verb)
	et cetera, etc. (do not use)
	flyer (when referring to a publication)
	full-time (adjective) before a noun; otherwise use full time (Ex: She worked full time. She has a full-time job.)
	fundraising, fundraiser
	G.I. Bill
	grassroots
	groundbreaking (avoid: overused word)
	health care (noun and adjective)
	high school students (no hyphen)
	home page
	hyperlink
	impact (avoid; use significance [n.], influence [n. or v.], effect [n.], or affect [v.])
	impactful (do not use)
	Internet (always use an initial cap), intranet
	IP address
	judgment
	multicultural
	"non" words—In general, do not hyphenate words with the prefix "non": nonmember, nonpartisan, nonprofit, nontraditional. Use hyphens before proper nouns (non-American) or awkward constructions (non-nuclear).
	on-site, off-site (adjective and adverb)

	online, offline part-time (adjective) before a noun; otherwise use part time (Ex: She worked part time. She has a part-time job.) policy maker, policy making (noun) postsecondary pro-choice pro-life (do not use; use anti-choice) screen saver shareware socioeconomic T-shirt (always use an initial cap) task force (use initial caps if part of a formal title) tax deductible (no hyphen unless before a noun: tax-deductible dues) time line tool kit turnout (noun), turn out (verb) URL (Uniform Resource Locator) versus (always spell out; do not use vs. Use v. for court cases) voice mail (noun), voice-mail (adjective) web, web page, webcast, website (avoid using World Wide Web—the preferred term is Internet) workday, workforce, workout (work out [v.]), workplace, workroom, workstation, workweek zip code
Academic degrees	Avoid alphabet soup; do not use Ph.D., M.A., B.A. Do not list academic degrees after names except on the title page of research reports. Note: Academic degrees and other credentials may follow a person's name in the address section of a business letter. See "Forms of Address" in *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (pp. 1618–22). Use doctoral degree, master's degree, bachelor's degree, or associate degree in a sentence. Do not use initial caps. Do not use initial caps for subjects or fields unless the words are proper nouns: master's degree in education, doctoral degree in English.
Academic departments	Use caps only for proper nouns: English department, Spanish department, history department, women's studies department. Use initial caps when the department is the proper name: University of Michigan History Department.

Acronyms and abbreviations	Spell out the word, name, or phrase at the first reference: U.N. Development Fund for Women, UNIFEM on second reference. If the acronym is not used again for several pages (or chapters), spell out the word, name, or phrase again.
Academic year	Use the four-digit year, an en dash and then a two-digit year, 2010–11 school year.
Administration	Never capitalize administration when you use it to describe the president's staff: Obama administration.
Case names	Italicize case names, e.g., *Roe v. Wade*, the *Roe* case. Use "v." for versus.
Composition titles	See "Titles."
Congress (U.S.)	Always use an initial capital letter for Congress when referring to the U.S. Congress: U.S. Congress, 111th Congress, Congress. Always lowercase congressional unless it's part of a title. Use initial caps for the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives (or House). See also "Senators and representatives."
Courts	Use initial caps only when using the formal name of the court: U.S. Supreme Court or Supreme Court, Arizona Supreme Court, state supreme court, the court. Capitalize judge, chief justice, and justice only as a title before a name. For the U.S. Court of Appeals, abbreviate the number as follows: U.S. Court of Appeals for the 1st (2nd, 3rd, 11th) Circuit.
Dates	Spell out all months, even in dates. When you use a full date, precede and follow the year with a comma: The press conference was held October 14, 2010, in the Talbot Room. Do not use commas when you use the month and day: The form you submitted on January 17 was missing the budget code.

	When you use the month and year, do not precede or follow the year with a comma: The report released in January 2006 is about sexual harassment. Never write June 2nd, Jan. 1st, July 4th. Write June 2, January 1, July 4. Watch line breaks. Always keep the month and day together on the same line. The year can be on the next line.
Disabled	Use "people with disabilities."
E.g., i.e.	e.g. = for example; i.e. = in other words or that is Spell out or avoid in text; abbreviations can be used in parentheses.
Et cetera (etc.)	Avoid using this word and its abbreviation, except in parentheses.
Fiscal year	In a sentence, use fiscal year 2011–12 or FY11–12. Capitalize fiscal year only in a headline. Use en dashes.
GED	General equivalency diploma. Spell out in the first reference.
Inc. and Ltd.	In text, do not put a comma before Inc. or Ltd. in a company name. In acknowledgment lists, punctuate the company name as the company prefers.
Legislation	Put a space between the abbreviation and the number: S. 1416, S. Res. 3, H.R. 9933, H. Res. 177.
Lesbian, gay	Do not use the term homosexual. Use lesbian when referring to women; use gay when referring to men. When referring to both, use lesbians and gay men as the noun form and gay as the adjective form.
Money	Use .00 only with other fractional amounts: $4 and $5, but $4.00 and $4.65. For cents, write 75 cents, 10 cents.
Numbers	Spell out numbers from one to nine; use numerals for 10 and beyond. Spell out first through ninth; use numerals for 10th and beyond (except for federal courts, e.g., U.S. Court of Appeals for the 2nd Circuit [see above], and percentages [see below]).
Op-ed	An opinion piece written that appears opposite the editorial page ("opposite editorial").

Party affiliation	To designate the state and party affiliation for members of Congress, use D (Democrat), I (Independent), or R (Republican) and follow it with a hyphen and the postal abbreviation for the state in parentheses: Sen. Mark Warner (D-VA).
Percent	Always use numerals—even for 1 percent. In text, spell out "percent," e.g., 5 percent. In tables, use the % symbol: 5%. For amounts less than 1 percent, precede the decimal with a zero: 0.6 percent. Do not exceed two places after decimals in text: 2.58 percent, not 2.57934 percent.
Races	Write black, African American, Asian Pacific American (not Oriental), Hispanic, Latino, Latina, Native American, white. Do not use initial caps on black or white.
Seasons	Never use initial caps for seasons except when referring to issues of a periodical: Spring 2009 issue of *AAUW Outlook*; I went to Maine in summer 2010.
Senators and representatives	Do not use initial caps for senator and representative unless they are part of a title that precedes someone's name. Always abbreviate before a name on first reference: Sen./Sens., Rep./Reps. Use just the last name on second reference. Examples: Sen. Tom Harkin, Harkin; the senators agreed to postpone the vote; Mitch McConnell, the senator who was previously the Senate majority leader. See also "Congress (U.S.)."
State names	Spell out state names: The plaintiff is from Rome, Georgia. If you use a city and state, precede and follow the state with commas: I visited Cincinnati, Ohio, in spring 2009. When writing Washington, D.C., precede and follow D.C. with commas and put periods after D and C. Use a hyphen in D.C.-area before a noun: D.C.-area events. In envelope addresses, footnotes, and bibliographies, use the state postal abbreviation: 1111 Sixteenth St. NW, Washington, DC 20036

Telephone numbers	Write all telephone and fax numbers as follows: 202/785-7701. Do not precede the phone number with a "1." Watch line breaks; do not break a telephone number in the middle.
That or which	Use "that" to introduce an essential clause; use "which" to introduce a clause that adds information but is otherwise unnecessary: The court made a decision that was unpopular. The decision, which was unpopular, changed the meaning of the law.
Time	Use lowercase a.m. and p.m. Use "noon" and "midnight" instead of 12 p.m. or 12 a.m. Do not use 00 for the whole hours in text or in schedules: 1 p.m., not 1:00 p.m. Do not say 10 a.m. in the morning—a.m. indicates morning.
Titles People's titles Composition titles	In text, capitalize a person's title when the title precedes the name (AAUW President Carolyn Garfein) but use lowercase when it follows the name (George W. Bush, former president of the United States) or when it stands alone (the president of the United States). In acknowledgment lists, letter signatures, and speakers in AAUW program books, capitalize titles when they follow the name. AAUW does not use titles such as Ms., Mr., or Dr. in publications. Italicize titles of books, reports, newspapers, magazines, newsletters, movies, plays, poems, TV programs, and works of art. Enclose articles and chapter titles in quotation marks. Do not capitalize any prepositions in titles. All verbs are capitalized, even "is." Capitalize the last word of the title regardless of the word length.
United States and United Nations	Spell out when they're used as a noun: traveling in the United States, I'm from the United States. Abbreviate them when they're used as an adjective: the U.N. representative; the U.S. soccer team. Use periods with the abbreviations: U.S. or U.N., not US or UN.

Formatting and Punctuation	
Colon (:)	Use colons at the end of a full sentence to introduce lists: I promise to do the following: write carefully, punctuate correctly, and proofread diligently. Colons should never follow prepositions (to, from, in, by), verbs (can, are, do), or sentence fragments. You can usually avoid mistakes by adding the words "the following" or rephrasing the sentence. If a colon appears within a sentence, capitalize the first word following the colon only if it is a proper noun or if the words following the colon form a complete sentence: Watch out for line breaks: Always keep telephone numbers together.
Comma (,)	Always use serial commas: red, white, and blue; not red, white and blue. If commas appear within elements in a series, separate the elements with semicolons. Do not use semicolons in a series, regardless of the length of the elements, if commas will do.
Dash	See "Em dash" and "En dash" below.
Ellipsis (...)	Always include a space before and after the ellipsis. Use an ellipsis to indicate the deletion of one or more words in condensing quotes or to show a pause or hesitation in speech. Example: I ... tried to educate the students. To show omissions between sentences, follow a full sentence with a period and then insert an ellipsis: I tried to help them improve their writing. ... The students were eager to follow my advice.
Em dash (—)	Use em dashes to signal an abrupt change in thought or an emphatic pause: Jack offered a plan—unexpected and unappreciated—to cut salaries. In print do not insert spaces before and after the em dash. On the web do insert spaces before and after em dashes. To make an em dash, type two consecutive regular dashes (--) or go to the MS Word Insert menu, select Symbol, and then select the Special Characters tab. From there, you can create your own keyboard shortcut. The em dash is the first entry. Be consistent: Use either the double dash or the em dash throughout your document.

En Dash (–)	Use en dashes to indicate a range of numbers or dates: January 12–February 3, 2010. Do not insert spaces before and after the en dash. Go to the MS Word Insert menu, then Symbol, and then Special Characters to insert an en dash or create a keyboard shortcut.
Hyphen (-)	Do not use a hyphen after adverbs ending in "ly": federally funded.
Line breaks	When breaking words at the end of a line, leave at least three letters at the end of the line and put at least three letters on the second line. Not essential on the web. In dates, always keep the month and day together. The year can be on the next line. Do not break telephone numbers. Try to avoid three consecutive hyphens in line breaks. (Not essential on the web.) Be sure you have at least three letters of a hyphenated word on each line. Never use a hyphen to break a web address that extends beyond one or more lines.
Lists	Run-in Lists Incorporate short, simple lists into your text. Use a colon to introduce a list only after a complete sentence; do not use a colon after a preposition or verb. *Correct:* Highlights of the student leader conference include the following: networking, exciting speakers, and great food. Highlights of the student leader conference include networking, exciting speakers, and great food. *Incorrect:* Highlights of the student leader conference include: networking, exciting speakers, and great food. Displayed Lists Introduce displayed lists with a complete sentence, followed by a colon. For bulleted or numbered lists, capitalize the first word following the bullet or number. Keep the list items parallel. If you start one item with a verb, start them all with a verb. Avoid lists that include both incomplete and complete sentences. If the items in your list are complete sentences, put a period at the end of each one.

	Example: Use the following guidelines for displayed lists: • Introduce the list with a complete sentence, followed by a colon. • Use parallel construction. [In this example, each item is a complete sentence that begins with a verb.] • Begin each item with a capital letter, and put periods at the end of complete sentences. Displayed Lists Punctuated as a Sentence You may punctuate a displayed list as a sentence if the items in the list complete the sentence begun in the introductory phrase. Begin each item in the list with a lowercase letter, and place commas at the end of all but the final item. Use semicolons instead of commas if commas appear within any of the list items. Place a period after the final item. You may put "and" at the end of the second to the last item (after the comma or semicolon). *Example:* Guidelines for displayed lists punctuated as sentences include 1. beginning each item in the list with a lowercase letter, 2. placing commas at the end of each item, 3. using parallel construction, and 4. ending the final item with a period.
Quotation marks (" ")	In punctuating quotations, place quotation marks after periods and commas. Put quotation marks before colons, semicolons, dashes, question marks, and exclamation points. Punctuation that is part of the quoted material or expresses inflection should go inside quotation marks. Do not use quotation marks on block quotes.
Semicolon (;)	Use semicolons to separate elements of a series only when commas appear within the elements. Be sure to include a semicolon before the final "and" in such a series. Semicolons also separate closely related independent clauses not connected by conjunctions. See also "Comma."
Sentence length	Keep sentences short on the web. Condense, condense, condense.
Spacing between sentences	Use one space, not two, between sentences.

Titles and headings	Lowercase all prepositions in titles. Capitalize all verbs, even "is." Capitalize the first and last words of the title regardless of the word length. Never use all caps in titles or headlines, unless you are using an acronym.
Underline	Do not underline words in print or on the web (except hyperlinks). Highlight them some other way.
Verbs	Use active verbs. Avoid "is" and "are." Active verbs draw the reader in.
Web addresses	When referencing websites in publications, do not include the http://; start with www. If the address does not include www, keep the http://, as in http://blog-aauw.org.