



Editorial Style Guide for Maricopa Community Colleges

This editorial style guide is for all Maricopa Community Colleges employees, who must follow this guide for proper and consistent writing. This guide adheres to the Associated Press (AP) Stylebook with a few Maricopa-specific anomalies (See Non-AP Style Deviations p.15).

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Proper Names at Maricopa

Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD) is a system of 10 colleges, a multitude of satellite locations, and a District Office serving Maricopa County in Arizona.

Maricopa Locations and Abbreviations

- Maricopa Community Colleges District Office (District Office, DO, aka District Support Services or DSS)
- Chandler-Gilbert Community College (CGCC)
- Estrella Mountain Community College (EMCC)
- GateWay Community College (GWCC)
- Glendale Community College (GCC)
- Mesa Community College (MCC)
- Paradise Valley Community College (PVCC)
- Phoenix College (PC)
- Rio Salado College (RSC)
- Scottsdale Community College (SCC)
- South Mountain Community College (SMCC)

Notes:

- Always use the full name of the college on first reference, followed by the college's abbreviation in parentheses. It is OK to solely use the abbreviation with each subsequent mention of the college.
 - "Scottsdale Community College (SCC) has a comprehensive tourism program. SCC students love this program."
- School names do not include "The" (capital "T") as part of their name ("The Mesa Community College is located..." would be incorrect). However, you may use "the" before the school name in certain circumstances such as "The Mesa Community College book store will be closed on the holiday."

Maricopa Naming Style

Use of Maricopa County Community College District and MCCCD

Maricopa County Community College District is the legal entity name. The full legal name must be used in legal applications and in national news coverage.

- Use the official name **rarely, if at all, in marketing copy** (the message and copy should be more about the student than the District).
- On first reference, use the entire official name followed by the initialism (MCCCD) in parentheses, which is used thereafter.
 - "Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD) ... MCCCD ..."
- It should be used as a singular noun with respective verb agreement.
- "Maricopa County Community College District is committed to preparing students for the workforce."
- It's OK to use "the District" (capital D) when referring specifically to MCCCD.

- But use “districtwide” (no “the”) when referring to something across the entire district, including all the colleges. For example, “During February, districtwide celebrations...”

Use of Maricopa Community Colleges

In marketing communications, Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD) is generally referred to as Maricopa Community Colleges. Treat Maricopa Community Colleges as a singular noun.

- “Maricopa Community Colleges provides quality education.”
- “Maricopa Community Colleges is accessible to all students.”

Notes:

- Do not use MCCCD on marketing content or material for prospective students—Use Maricopa Community Colleges.
- Never abbreviate Maricopa Community Colleges as MCC (this refers to Mesa Community College)
- When forming the possessive for Maricopa Community Colleges, even though it is a singular noun, it is in the plural form so only add an apostrophe, not an apostrophe (s) - 's.
 - “Maricopa Community Colleges’ student population...”
- Do not use plural agreement. “Maricopa Community Colleges are...” would be incorrect (see the next bullet for further clarification).
- Do not use the definite article “the” in front of “Maricopa Community Colleges” when referring to the singular entity. The exception would be when referencing all the colleges as a collection of individual schools. In that case, use “the Maricopa Community Colleges” (as a plural noun). General reference to “colleges” should be lowercase.
 - “Maricopa Community Colleges is proud to introduce its newest certifications.”
 - “The 10 Maricopa Community Colleges are gathering to celebrate...”
 - “The Colleges provide accessible, quality education to the community.”
 - “If you choose one of our 10 community colleges, your tuition costs will be less.”

Use of Maricopa Community Colleges System

- Another way to reference the Maricopa Community Colleges entity is to include the word “system.”
- Precede with “the” when referencing the system
 - The “Maricopa Community Colleges system is one of the largest...”
- Use sparingly and with approval as the word “system” may not be appropriate or wanted in all communications.
- It should also be used as a singular noun.
 - “The Maricopa Community Colleges system is dedicated to student success.”
 - “The Maricopa Community Colleges system fosters student success.”

Naming Conventions for the Individual Colleges

When referencing one of the 10 Maricopa Community Colleges, spell out the entire college name in the first instance followed by its abbreviation, for example Estrella Mountain Community

College (EMCC). You can then use the college campus name in each instance thereafter or the abbreviation (for example, Estrella Mountain or EMCC).

- “Chandler-Gilbert Community College (CGCC) was founded in 1985. Chandler-Gilbert’s mascot is the coyote.”
- When colleges are listed in a table, just use the college campus name (e.g., Paradise Valley) and be sure to name the column, “College”.

Definitions/Acronyms/Abbreviations

Academic Program vs Program

An **academic program** is defined as any combination of courses and requirements leading to a degree, certificate, major, or academic track.

A **program** provides a specific constituent group with academic support, supplemental or alternative curricular and non-curricular activities, privileges, special access, scholarships, and/or distinguished recognition. Programs do not receive awards. Examples of group-based programs include Honors, Hoop of Learning, and Dual Enrollment.

College Fees vs Tuition

Both words have the same meaning and are defined as a fee paid for instruction or teaching, usually for higher education.

Only use the word **tuition** when writing content; using the word **college fees** is not permitted.

Class Fees

Use the word **class fees** when describing additional fees that are required for a single class, separate from tuition.

Apply vs Enroll vs Register

Apply should be used when referring to the act of initially gaining admittance into a college.

- “Apply to be a student at one of our colleges within Maricopa Community Colleges.”

Enroll should be used when referring to the act of becoming a student at a specific college. The student must have already applied before enrolling.

- “Once your application is approved, you can enroll at Phoenix College.”

Register should be used when referencing signing up for classes. The student must already be enrolled prior to registering.

- “Students enrolled at Phoenix College can register for an accounting class.”

Events/Conferences

Spell out the event's full title on first reference. If the group holding the event has an acronym, use the acronym after first reference.

- "The conference of the International Consortium for Educational and Economic Development (ICEED)...Members of ICEED from across the US, Canada and Mexico..."
- "Arizona Women in Higher Education (AWHE) hosted their annual conference June 2-3, 2016 ... Many women are proud to be part of AWHE."

Special Groups/Orgs/Departments/Initiatives

Some groups/initiatives/programs have special acronyms or naming standards.

- TRiO/TRiO Upward Bound/TRiO Student Support Services (or TRiO SSS on subsequent mentions)
- Achieving a College Education Program (ACE) or Adults Achieving a College Education (Adult ACE).
- Kids College (Estrella Mountain summer programs for kids; no apostrophe needed because the kids don't own the college.)

Degree Titles

Use an apostrophe in bachelor's degree, a master's, etc., but there is no possessive in Bachelor of Arts or Master of Science.

- The terms "bachelor's degree," "master's degree" and "doctorate" are lowercase.
 - associate degree
 - B.A.
 - B.S.
 - M.A. or M.S.
 - Ph.D.
- Maricopa style dictates avoiding the use of abbreviations such as B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. unless this preferred style is cumbersome. Use abbreviations only after a full name and set the abbreviations off with commas.
 - "Dorothee Kern, Ph.D., M.S., delivered a lecture on enzymes.
- Note: Some Ph.D. faculty members and the Chancellor prefer "Dr."
 - "Dr. Maria Harper-Marinick has devoted her career to education."

Awards and Certificates

Degrees and **Certificates** refer to formal documents that prove a student successfully completed an academic program. Awards can also refer to degrees or certificates either individually or when they are being referenced together as a catchall.

- "He received an award in biology."
- "The English Department offers awards in creative writing."

Award is also used as a verb when referring to the act of giving or bestowing a degree or certificate.

- "John was awarded an associate degree in psychology."
- "You will be awarded with a certificate in Art: Drawing."

High School Equivalency Programs

The GED test and associated programs and prep courses are usually referred to as the High School Equivalency (HSE) exam. However, the Department of Education still includes GED, so both terms may be included.

Maricopa Naming Anomalies

- Capitalize important Maricopa Community College boards and departments. Spell out on first reference and on second reference refer to as “the Board” or “the Governing Board.” Use caps but do not cap “the.”
 - “The Maricopa Community Colleges Governing Board
 - On Monday, the Board voted six to zero for....
- Capitalize titles such as Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, etc.
 - “Dr. Maria Harper-Marinick is Chancellor of Maricopa County Community College District, one of the largest community college systems in the nation.”

Position Titles

For position titles, including faculty positions, use cap for the positions.

- the Chancellor
- Chancellor Steven Gonzales
- Suzie Smith, Lecturer in English, Mesa Community College

Following AP style, do not use honorifics (Mr., Mrs.). List someone’s full name on first reference and then use his or her last name.

- “Dan Smith is a student at MCCC. Smith received a scholarship...”

Titles of Academic Courses

Generally:

- Capitalize course names, i.e., the titles of courses.
 - Anthropology 101: The Human Experience
- Do not italicize course titles or put quotation marks around them. Subject names are not capitalized.
 - “Our biology graduates”
 - “the softball team”

Offices, Departments, and Team/Group Titles

Generally:

- Capitalize the entire name of the office, department, team/group, committee, etc.
 - Maricopa Community Colleges Governing Board
- Do not use italics or quotes for/around department names.
- If words like “office”, “department”, or “division” are part of that group name, also capitalize that word.
 - Office of the Chancellor.
- Use “and” not “&” in a department/office name.
 - Marketing and Communications (not Marketing & Communications).

Events, Special Program Names, Conferences

Generally:

- Cap name of event.
 - Sanford Institute Football Tournament
- Cap special program names.
 - Dual Enrollment high school program, Dual Enrollment courses
- Use double quotes only in rare instances for clarity (not single quotes, unless needed for a quote within a quote):
 - Phoenix College's "Dumpster Dive" To Determine How Much Trash is Recyclable
 - Glendale CC to Participate in Free National "Teach-In" on Climate Change

Enrollment, Admissions, Registration

Use language that is more inviting and less daunting for the target audience regarding the basic and overall process of attending and taking classes at MCCCDC.

- Use “enroll” for the basic process of being admitted to MCCCDC. This is more inclusive and seems easier to do. Avoid “apply” or “applying,” which connotes the possibility of not getting admitted.
- ONLY use “apply” for special programs or processes where a student must go through some kind of application process.
 - “You must apply for nursing since it is a special grant-funded program.”
 - “Apply for financial aid and scholarships.”
- Use “register” when referring to adding classes.
 - “Now that you have enrolled at MCCCDC, you can register for classes.”

Spelling Preferences

Here is the preferred spelling for the following:

- Maricopa Nursing (not MaricopaNursing)
- Advisor (not adviser)
- Lifelong (not life-long)
- District-wide (not districtwide)
- Healthcare (not health care)
- Theater (not theatre). Use “theatre” if it is part of the official name
 - “The theater has many great plays.”
 - “The Hertzberg Theatre is producing Shakespeare’s plays.”
 - “Drama/Theatre Arts and Stagecraft” area of study
 - “Technical Theatre”, CCL degree.

Note: Only the titles should have this spelling, other references within the course descriptions/degrees should be “theater.”

AP Style

This style is the standard for communications, with the exception of some Maricopa-specific deviations for web and social media.

Abbreviations

- ID (not I.D.) Capitalize ID, with no periods or spaces, eg, Student ID (identification card).
- R.S.V.P. (do not use: RSVP, rsvp or r.s.v.p.) Do not include “please” with this. Instead, write: “R.S.V.P. by calling...” or “Please respond by calling...”

Ages

- For ages, always use figures.
 - The girl, 8, has a brother, 11.
- If the age is used as an adjective or as a substitute for a noun, then it should be hyphenated.
 - The contest is for 18-year-olds.
- Don’t use apostrophes when describing an age range.
 - He is in his 20s.

Currency

- 5 cents, \$1.05, \$650,000, \$2.45 million
- 300 Canadian dollars = C\$300 or Can\$300
- 5 (euro) cents, €1.05, €650,000, €2.45 million

Dates

- Always use Arabic figures, without st, nd, rd or th.
- When a month is used with a specific date, abbreviate only Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., and Dec.: Fall Open House will be held on Oct. 8.
- When a phrase lists only a month and year, do not separate the month and the year with commas: The new website will launch in December 2007.
- When a phrase refers to a month, day and year, set off the year with commas:
 - January 15, 2008, was the first day of the semester.

Decades

- Do not use an apostrophe between the year and the s.
 - The 1960s

Numbers

- Spell out the numbers one through nine. Use Arabic numerals for 10 and up. Always use Arabic numerals for ages and percentages, even for numbers less than 10.
 - One through nine
“The Board voted six to three for more funding.”
 - 10+
“They picked 75 apples today at the fair.”
- Spell out numbers that start a sentence. If the result is awkward, reconfigure the sentence:
 - “Seventy-five students attended the symposium yesterday.”
 - “Yesterday, 635 seniors were awarded degrees.”

- The exception to this rule is a sentence that begins with a calendar year. Calendar year is numerical.
 - “2007 was a record-breaking year for fundraising.”
- Use Roman numerals for wars, monarchs, and Popes.
 - World War II, King George VI, Pope John XXIII
- In the case of proper names, use words or numerals according to the organization’s practice:
 - 3M, Twentieth Century Fund, Big Ten
- Academic credits are always expressed in numerals.
 - “This is a 3-credit course.”
 - “The major requires a total of 36 credits.”
- The preferred form for listing telephone numbers is the following:
 - 480-968-7666, ext. 169

Percentages

Spell out “percent”; never use the symbol %.

- “The grant is 100 percent funded by...”

Plurals and Possessives

- The possessive case of singular nouns is formed by the addition of an “apostrophe s” (’s). The possessive case of plural nouns is formed by the addition of an apostrophe only. This applies to proper nouns and common nouns.
 - “Chandler-Gilbert Community College’s English program.”
- Nouns that are singular in meaning that end in “s” but take the plural form, like Maricopa Community Colleges and United States, only add an apostrophe to form the possessive
 - Maricopa Community Colleges’ student body
 - The United States’ diplomatic efforts
- Single or multiple letters used as words and numbers (whether spelled out or in figures) form the plural by adding “s”.
 - IOUs
 - VCRs
 - the 1900s
- Abbreviations ending with a period form the plural using “s” (no apostrophe).
 - Ph.D.s
 - M.D.s
 - Psy.D.s

Race and Ethnic Identifiers

- Capitalize racial and ethnic identifiers such as Black, Latino, Asian American, and Native American.
- “Black” should only be lowercase when referring to a color, not a person.
- Capitalize “Indigenous” when referring to original inhabitants of a place.
 - The Maricopa Community Colleges is committed to providing our Indigenous community with the tools to succeed.

Seasons

Lowercase seasons, as well as derivatives like “wintertime” unless part of a formal name.

- the Winter Olympics
- Fall semester (cap season only when referring to a particular semester)
- “In the summer, she plans to take swimming lessons.”

Time

Compound times are hyphenated:

- 35-minute test.
- The test took 35 minutes.

Spell out noon and midnight. Use a colon to separate hours from minutes, but do not use :00.

- 1 p.m., 3:30 a.m.
- 9 to 11 a.m. (morning only hours) or 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. (morning to evening hours)
- O’clock is acceptable, but time listings with a.m. or p.m. (with periods) are preferred in the United States: 4 p.m. vs 4 o’clock.
- A hyphen with a space on both sides can be used instead of “to,” e.g., 9 - 11 a.m.

Internet/Web terminology

E terms:

- e-book
- e-business
- e-marketing
- e-reader
- email (not e-mail, not Email)

Terms:

- home page
- internet
- web: lowercase in all circumstances
- web page: two words
- web-based: hyphenated. NOT: web based, Web-based, or Web based
- webcam: one word, lowercase. Just in case you weren’t confused yet
- webmaster: one word, lowercase
- website: one word, lowercase
- Wi-Fi: hyphenated, both caps (not WiFi, wifi or Wi-fi)
- log in: verb
- login: noun
- log on: verb
- logon: noun
- online: not on-line or On-line

Titles of Books, Periodicals, Compositions

- Never underline titles. Underlined text that appears online could be mistaken for links.
- Use quotation marks around the titles of books, songs, movies, television shows, computer games, poems, lectures, speeches, and works of art (except the Bible and

books that are primarily catalogs of reference material, such as the Encyclopedia Britannica):

- Author Porter Shreve read from his new book, “When the White House Was Ours.”
- They sang “The Star-Spangled Banner” before the game.
- “Gone With the Wind,” NBC’s “Today Show”
- The Bible and the Gospel of John
- Do not use quotations around the names of magazines, newspapers, the Bible, or books that are catalogs of reference materials.
 - The *Washington Post* first reported the story.
 - He reads the Bible every morning.
- Capitalize the principal words, including prepositions and conjunctions of four or more letters.
- Translate a foreign title into English, unless the American public knows the work by its foreign name.
 - Rousseau’s “War,” not Rousseau’s “La Guerre.”
 - Leonardo da Vinci’s “Mona Lisa.”
- Capitalize “The” in the publication name if that is part of the official name.
 - “The author of *The Times* spoke today.”
- Lowercase “the” before names if listing several publications, some of which use “the” as part of the name and some of which do not.
 - *Time*
 - *Newsweek*
 - the *Washington Post*
 - the *New York Times*

Titles of Directions/Regions

- Lowercase cardinal directions (north, south, northeast, northern, etc.) when they indicate compass direction:
 - The cold front is moving east.
- Capitalize cardinal directions when they designate U.S. regions:
 - A storm system that developed in the West is spreading eastward.
- With names of countries, lowercase cardinal directions unless they are part of a proper name or are used in the proper name:
 - northern France, western United States, South Korea
- With states and cities, lowercase compass points when they describe a section of a state or city.
 - western Massachusetts, southern Atlanta
- Capitalize compass points when used in denoting widely known sections:
 - Southern California, Manhattan’s Lower East Side

United States

- As a noun, use United States:

- “Brandeis is one of the youngest private research universities in the United States.”
- As an adjective, use U.S. (no spaces):
 - “A U.S. senator will speak at Brandeis tomorrow.”
- Spell out the names of the states when they appear alone and in the body of stories:
 - “The governor of Massachusetts was re-elected.”
- Use the following state abbreviations:
 - Ala. Ga. Mich. N.J. R.I. Wis.
 - Ariz. Ill. Minn. N.M. S.C. Wyo.
 - Ark. Ind. Miss. N.Y. S.D.
 - Calif. Kan. Mo. N.C. Tenn.
 - Colo. Ky. Mont. N. D. Vt.
 - Conn. La. Neb. Okla. Va.
 - Del. Md. Nev. Ore. Wash.
 - Fla. Mass. N.H. Pa. W.Va.
- Never abbreviate the following states:
 - Alaska
 - Hawaii
 - Idaho
 - Iowa
 - Maine
 - Ohio
 - Texas
 - Utah
- Abbreviate the names of states when they appear with the name of a city, town, village or military base.
 - Waltham, Mass.
 - Hanscom Air Force Base, Mass.
- Also use state abbreviations for the following:
 - Datelines
 - Lists
 - Agate
 - Tabular material
 - Non-publishable editor's notes
 - Credit lines
 - Photo captions
 - Short-form listings of party affiliation
 - D-Ala., R-Mont.
- State is lowercase.
 - the “state of Arizona”

Geographical Terms

Geographical terms that are considered proper names are capitalized. Lowercase descriptive adjectives that are not part of a recognized name.

- Capitalize “Valley of the Sun” or “the Valley” when referring to the metro Phoenix area.
- West Valley as a location, west valley as a descriptor.
- Use the street address and city, but not the state and zip code in school addresses for events, articles, etc.
- Capitalize “Greater Southwest.”
- Capitalize “Earth” when used as the name of one of the planets (as you would the other planets, such as Mercury, Venus, etc.). Use lowercase in instances where the word means or refers to something else.
 - “The Earth is one of the planets in our solar system.”
 - “They planted the seeds in some earth”
 - “She is down to earth.”

Caps and/or LC in Headlines

Generally:

- Only the first word and proper nouns are capitalized.
- The first word after a colon is always capitalized (in headlines only).
- Do not capitalize articles (a, an, the) and prepositions (for, to, with), unless the word is essential to the headline. For example, “He Came to the House Only **To** Be Criticized” (in this case, “To” is part of a verb phrase (to be) and is a principle word).
- Verbs are capped as the first word of the headline or if it is a principal word where the rule is to cap principal words. For example, per AP, both of the following are correct: “Dying to be thin” or “Dying To Be Thin.”
- Do not use full sentences as a title.

Referencing Application Field and Form Names

When referencing an application field or form name, add double quotation marks around the name.

- Select “Save” from the “File” menu.
- Select the “Agree to Terms and Conditions” checkbox.

Non-AP Style Deviations

Maricopa Style Anomalies

In some cases, Maricopa Community Colleges will deviate from AP Style:

- Use of serial comma. AP Style does not use a serial comma (also known as the Oxford comma), so this is a Maricopa style anomaly.
 - The serial comma is used after the last item in a list of three or more items, before “and” or “or”
 - Example: “In order to begin coursework, students will need to apply, enroll, and register for classes.”
 - See “Comma” on page 20.

- Capitalization of position titles. AP Style does not capitalize position titles (even “president of the United States”) unless the title precedes the person’s name.
 - According to Maricopa style, all academic titles should be capitalized.
 - Example: “The panel discussion will be led by Dr. Steve Gonzalez, Interim Chancellor, and Jane Doe, Professor of English.”
 - See “Position Titles” on page 8.
- “Healthcare” is one word (AP treats “health care” as two words)
 - See “Spelling Preferences” on page 9.

List Formats

Bullets and Punctuation

Write and format lists as follows:

- Introduce a bulleted list with a phrase that makes the list read like a continuous, flowing sentence.
- Use parallel construction for each item in the list.

Here is a noun list:

If awarded, the scholarship will cover the cost of:

- Tuition
- Books
- Supplies

And a Call to Action (CTA) list:

At Maricopa Community Colleges, you can participate in a variety of activities:

- Get involved with community projects
- Join the softball team
- Write for the school newspaper

- At the end of the phrase introducing the list, use a colon.
- In front of each item, or to introduce each item, use a bullet.
- Capitalize each item at the beginning.
- Do not add punctuation at the end of each line, including after the last item in the list.
- Sub-bullets are OK to use, but indent and use an open circle.
- Use a numbered list when referring to steps or items that need to be numbered.

Example:

Enrollment has four steps:

1. Get admitted
2. Take placement tests
3. Register for courses
4. Pay tuition and fees

Grammar

Sentence Structure

Use a single space after a period.

Compound/Complex Sentences

Try to avoid really long sentences. Restructure to avoid cumbersome sentences or concepts. Also avoid too many conjunctions (and, or, but) and internal punctuation. (See also “Comma” and “Semicolon” section in this document.)

Words to Avoid (If Possible)

- Got
- That
- Which
- More
- Even
- Here
- In addition
- Use concise transitions, i.e., instead of “in addition,” use “additionally.”
- Use “however” sparingly

When to Use “That”

- On the other hand, if it would change the meaning to throw out the clause, you need a “that.” Do all cars use hybrid technology? No. So you would say, “Cars that have hybrid technology get great gas mileage.”
- Is every leaf green? No. So you would say, “Leaves that are green contain chlorophyll.”
- It would change the meaning to throw out the clause in those examples, so you need a “that.” (Also note the clause isn’t surrounded by commas. Restrictive clauses usually aren’t set off by commas.)

That vs. Which

That

- Use “that” when the information you are including in the sentence limits or restricts the subject.
 - Gems **that sparkle** often elicit forgiveness.
The words “that sparkle” restrict the kind of gems you are talking about. Without them, the meaning of the sentence would change.
- Use “that” to describe a singular inanimate object or animal without a specific name.
- Use “that” for essential clauses that are important to the meaning of the sentence.
 - “I remember the day that I met my future wife.”

Which

- If the phrase you want to include can be left off without changing the meaning of the sentence, use “which.” You can think of the phrase as additional information.
 - “Diamonds, which are expensive, often elicit forgiveness.”
- These phrases are usually set off by commas.
 - “There was an earthquake in China, which is bad news.”
- Use “which” when referring to plural inanimate objects or animals without names.

- Use “which” for nonessential clauses where the pronoun is not necessary.
 - “The team, which won the championship last year, begins their 2012 season next month.”
- Don’t use “which” in reference to people. People should be “who.”

Who vs. Whom

Who

- Use “who” when it functions as the subject performing the action.
- Example: “That’s the student who wrote the award-winning essay.”
- Tip: If you’re unsure, replace “who” with “he/she/they” and see if it makes sense with the verb. Example: “**He** wrote the award-winning essay.”

Whom

- Use “whom” when it functions as an object receiving the action.
- Example: “Whom do you like best?”
- Tip: If you’re unsure, replace “whom” with “him/her/them” and see if it makes sense with the verb. Example: “Do you like **her** best?”

When to Hyphenate Grades/Ages

Hyphenate when the phrase describes the subject. The AP number rules (spell out 1-9, list 10+ as numerals) apply here.

- a fourth-grade pupil
- a 12-year-old student
- a first-grader
- a 10th-grader

Unhyphenated Verbs and Nouns

When a describing word precedes the noun it modifies, it should be one word, unhyphenated (e.g., leftover pasta). When it follows the noun it modifies, it is usually two words (e.g., There’s some pasta left over). Sometimes, the unhyphenated word also can work as a noun (e.g., We’re having leftovers).

Other examples:

- backup/back up –
One word as a noun or adjective referring to an accumulation or a form of support.
 - “The sink overflowed because of all the backup.”
 - “Chief, call for backup.”
 Two words as a verb.
 - “Please back up when you are in line to give people room.”
- giveaway/give away – One word as a noun, two words as a verb.
- leftover/left over – One word as a noun, two as a verb.
- makeup/make up – One word as a noun meaning composition or construction.
 - “the patient’s psychological makeup”
 Also one word as a noun meaning cosmetics.
 - “Young women often wear makeup.”

Two words when a verb.

- “Please make up your mind about this.”
- pickup/pick up – Whether you are talking about a truck, a UPS man fetching a package you want delivered, or succeeding with a romantic prospect, the noun is one word and the verb two.
 - “The pickup truck was overflowing with boxes.”
 - “Please pick up your trash.”
- signoff/sign off – One word as a noun, two as a verb.
 - “She gave us a signoff before going out of town.”
 - “The boss will need to sign off on these documents.”
- workout/work out – One word as a noun, two as a verb.
 - “He likes to fit a workout into his schedule a few times a week.”
 - “Please work out this problem with your coworkers.”

Whether (Or Not) ...When to use

Do not add “or not” after “whether” in the following instances.

- When the whether clause is the object of a verb:
 - “She wonders whether the teacher will attend.” (The clause is the object of wonders.)
- When the clause is the object of a preposition:
 - “The teacher will base his decision on whether the car has been repaired.” (The clause is the object of on.)
- When the clause is the subject of the sentence:
 - “Whether the car will be ready depends on the mechanic.” (The clause is the subject of depends.)

But do add “or not” after “whether” if:

- The clause modifies a verb:
 - “They will play tomorrow whether or not it rains.” (The clause modifies play.)

Garner’s Modern American Usage says: “or not” is only necessary when the phrase “whether or not” means “regardless of whether.”

Punctuation

Ampersands (&)

Do not use the ampersand symbol (&) as a substitute for ‘and’ even in headlines and subheads. The exception would be if it is part of a company’s name (Johnson & Johnson) or terms such as Q&A and R&B.

Apostrophe

- For singular common nouns ending in s, add 's.
 - the hostess's invitation
 - the witness's answer
- For plural nouns ending in “s,” add only an apostrophe.
 - the students' grades
 - states' rights

- For singular proper names ending in “s,” use only an apostrophe:
 - Brandeis’ mission
- For singular proper names ending in “s” sounds such as x, ce, and z, use 's.
 - Marx's theories
- For plurals of a single letter, add 's.
 - She received all A's this semester.
- For plurals of multiple letters, do not use an apostrophe
 - VCRs were replaced by DVD players.
- Do not use 's for plurals of numbers.
 - the 1960s

Colon

- Capitalize the first word after a colon only if it is a proper noun or the start of a complete sentence:
 - “She promised this: The team will go to nationals this year. But: There were three issues with the project: expense, time, and feasibility.”
- Colons go outside quotation marks unless they are part of the quoted material.
 - “We are the Millennials”: Can we find a better definition of generational differences?

Comma

- MCCCCD variation from AP style: Use a serial comma.
 - “Boston, Newton, and Cambridge are great cities.”
- Use a comma to set off a person's hometown and age
 - “John Smith, Newton, was accepted to Brandeis.”
 - “Jane Smith, 22, graduated yesterday.”
- Avoid overuse of commas in web and marketing copy. If a sentence becomes too complex, simplify it through restructuring or break it into multiple sentences.

Em Dashes

- Use the em dash to expand on a thought or place emphasis on one.
 - Maricopa Community Colleges prepares you for success – whether you’re working toward a degree, building on your existing skillset, or enriching your life by learning a new craft or skill.
- The em dash should have a space on both sides.

Hyphen

- Use a hyphen for compound adjectives before the noun.
 - well-known student
 - full-time job
 - 20-year sentence

- Do not use a hyphen when the compound modifier occurs after the verb.
 - “The student was well known.”
 - “She worked full time.”
 - “He was sentenced to 20 years.”
- Do not use a hyphen with compounds formed by an adverb ending in -ly plus an adjective, whether it’s before or after the noun. (“The owner was a smartly dressed man.”)
 - Insert a hyphen if the -ly word is **not** an adverb. (“They prepare family-sized meals.”)

Period and Parentheses

- Place a period outside a closing parenthesis if the material inside is not a sentence. If the material is an independent complete sentence, place the period inside the parentheses.
- Use a single space after the period at the end of a sentence.
- Do not put a space between initials.
 - C.S. Lewis
 - J.K. Rowling
- To avoid using back-to-back parentheses, use a semicolon
 - For example, change “...has harmful outcomes (such as PTSD) (Rodgers & Freed, 2022)” to “...has many outcomes (such as PTSD; Rodgers & Freed, 2022).”

Quotation Marks

- All punctuation marks except the colon and semicolon are always placed within quotation marks.
- In dialogue, each person’s words are placed in a separate paragraph, with quotation marks at the beginning and end of each person’s speech.
- Periods and commas always go within quotation marks.
- Dashes, semicolons, question marks, and exclamation points go within the quotation marks when they apply to the quoted material. They go outside when they apply to the whole sentence.
- Use single marks for quotes within quotes.
 - Smith said, "She told me, 'I wish I had been accepted to Brandeis.'"
- Application field and form names always go in quotation marks.
 - Select “Save” from the “File” menu.
 - Select the “Agree to Terms and Conditions” checkbox.

Semicolon

- Generally, avoid the use of semicolons in web and marketing copy.

Communication Formatting

Articles (The Maricopan and Maricopa Matters)

Requires a title (preferably with a verb), a sentence-long synopsis (or blurb), a description of the subject matter and objective, and contact information for the audience. An article is usually 200 to 300 words or more for the body. Insufficient information may require an editor of The Maricopan to contact the source for additional details. The content is then sent to the client for approval.

Format

- Title (abbreviate school name in headlines)
- Synopsis
- Body (school name spelled out in the first reference, abbreviation used thereafter)
- Contact Information

College Contact Information

Information on how to contact a specific college should be formatted in this order:

- College name
- College address
- Name of contact (Ex: Jane Doe)
- Phone number of contact
- Email of contact (Ex: jane.doe@cgc.edu)

Events and Special Engagements (The Maricopan)

A special engagement with a title, date, start time, and location. Usually features a title, short description of the event (50 to 100 words) as the body, and a “when,” “where,” and contact information for the audience. The content is then sent to the client for approval.

Format

- Title (abbreviate school name in headlines)
- Body (school name spelled out in first reference, acronym used thereafter)
- When
- Where
- Contact Information

Email

Communicating well by email can be tricky, as your voice and tone can easily be misconstrued. Here are a few suggestions to help you keep your communication friendly and productive.

- DON'T SHOUT AT PEOPLE! Use the caps lock sparingly to avoid being perceived as angry.
- Keep it short. Bullet points and whitespace help people digest your message more quickly.
- Be sure to mention whether a document or image is attached to the email.
- MCCC features an [eSignature](#) generator for employee use.

Press Releases

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2017 Feb 9

For Immediate Release

Maricopa Community Colleges Partners in First-of-Its-Kind Curriculum Collaboration to Train Advanced Technology Workforce

TEMPE, Arizona – Feb. 9, 2017 – Maricopa Community College District (MCCCD), Pima Community College District, and Central Arizona College leaders signed the Arizona Advanced Technologies Corridor project charter on Feb. 9, solidifying a partnership between the college systems that will create a standardized curriculum to create a highly skilled workforce that can serve advanced manufacturing operations in Arizona. Private companies, including Boeing and Raytheon, will work with the colleges to develop this first-of-its-kind curriculum. The first cohort is expected to be enrolled in this curriculum by September 2017.

“In establishing the Advanced Technologies Corridor, our three community college systems are taking a leadership role in providing an innovative, regional approach to respond to employer workforce needs and market demands. In doing so, we can better serve our students by providing clearer pathways to good jobs that are more seamless and not limited by geographic and governmental boundaries,” said Dr. Maria Harper-Marinick, Chancellor of Maricopa County Community College District. “To do this, we plan to engage technology, automotive, and advanced manufacturing companies so that we can understand their training needs — for existing employees and for the pipeline of skilled workers they will employ in the future.”

According to the Arizona Commerce Authority, more than 157,000 Arizonans are currently employed in manufacturing-related careers, and there is an increasing concentration of advanced manufacturing operations along the I-10 corridor from southeastern Phoenix to Tucson. Raytheon recently announced the addition of 2,000 jobs in Tucson, Lucid Motors will add 2,000 jobs in Casa Grande, and Intel is adding 3,000 employees at their Chandler facility.

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About Maricopa Community Colleges

The [Maricopa Community College](#) District includes 10 regionally accredited colleges – Chandler-Gilbert, Estrella Mountain, GateWay, Glendale, Mesa, Paradise Valley, Phoenix, Rio Salado, Scottsdale, and South Mountain – and the Maricopa Corporate College, serving more than 200,000 students with two-year degree, certificate, and university transfer programs.

Web Writing Style

Program Pages

Program Overviews provide a comprehensive summary of Maricopa Community College's educational programs. When writing a program overview, it's very important to keep in mind that we are *selling* the program. One tactic we use to sell our programs is to incorporate high-performing SEO (Search Engine Optimization) keywords to help the programs rank high on the search engine results pages (e.g., Google, Bing, Yahoo). In addition, we also integrate the following elements that we give thoughtful consideration to and how it aligns with the overall program overview structure:

1. High-ranking SEO keywords
2. A strong lead-in in the first paragraph that highlights the benefits of pursuing the degree (how the program will help the student) coupled with the skillsets students can gain
3. Career outcome, noting the possible jobs and industries that graduates of the program will be qualified for
4. One call to action that encourages prospective students to enroll in the program
5. Soft skills and hard skills students will develop from the program
6. Program Learning Outcome (what the program teaches), extracted from the official ACRES program description
7. Catchy tag line incorporating one call to action

Refer to [this checklist](#) when writing a program overview to ensure the overview meets our marketing editorial standards.

The following overviews exemplify how program overviews should be structured and written:

Example #1: [Business and Organizational Management Program Overview](#)

Example #2: [Pharmacy Technician Program Overview](#)

Example #3: [Ophthalmic Medical Assistant Program Overview](#)

Example #4: [Computed Tomography Program Overview](#)

Call To Action (CTA)

In marketing, a call to action (CTA) is a short phrase at the end of marketing copy that tells readers what to do next. Never confuse your audience by offering too many CTA choices. This will hurt your conversion rate.

- Best practices:
 - Use action-oriented language
 - Create urgency
 - Keep CTAs brief - no more than four words if possible
 - Use a maximum of 15 to 20 characters
 - Be specific about the action to take next (for example, "Enroll Now")
 - Make CTAs into a button

Content Links

- Use hyperlinks sparingly
- Do not paste a webaddress as a hyperlink — use the content to create the link: (for example, “For additional information, see the [Gilman Scholarship website.](#))
- Do not use “for information, click here.”
- Whenever linking to a new webpage, open a new tab (target_blank) for the link.

Names of Web-Based Companies and Media

When referencing technical or web company and media names:

- Many web-based companies have dropped .com as part of their formal names, e.g., Facebook, Google, Yahoo, YouTube, etc.
- Others, such as Amazon.com, still keep .com as part of the formal name; these should be treated as proper nouns and capitalized when you are referring to the corporate entity.
- If a media website has .com in its formal name, you may treat the website as a proper noun. For example, “Salon.com has a link to the Zimmerli announcement.”
- For publications, use the italicized publication name, but when mentioning the website, use the URL. For example, “He writes for the online edition of the *Economist*. The article and comments are archived at economist.com.”

Citing References in Web Copy

The need for a reference or citation in marketing copy should be rare. If needed (especially to adhere to proper source/resource documentation and legal standards), the citation should flow naturally, effortlessly into copy, and not be cumbersome for the reader. Some examples:

- “According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics’ most recent report, the need for information technology analysts will increase within the next 10 years.”
- “The need for information technology analysts will increase within the next 10 years (according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017).”

Second Person Language

Chiefly use “you” and “your” in writing so you are speaking directly to your reader. By employing you-centric language, writing remains active and focused on our No. 1 audience: students.

Social Media Writing Style

In general, the social media writing style follows a very casual and contemporary usage of the English language. Communication via social media is less formal than a press release or article, but spelling, punctuation (most of the time), and grammar still matter. It is best to use spell check or have someone proofread your message before it is published.

- Write on a level that the target audience will understand.

- This type of marketing/advertising language prioritizes short sentences with action verbs and a clear call to action.
 - Fall class registration at Maricopa Community Colleges is open for new and returning students. Enroll online today!
- Be clear and concise.
 - Today is World Environment Day! The theme this year is “Connecting People to Nature.”
- Choose words that are welcoming and inclusive.
 - As we celebrate our nation's freedom on July 4, we honor the courageous men and women dedicated to preserving it.
- Avoid using slang, jargon, acronyms, expletives, sexual innuendo, or abbreviations.
 - Incorrect: “AMWU offers tips and resources for job seekers.”
Correct: “Arizona Municipal Water Users Association offers tips and resources for job seekers to land a public health job at one of Arizona’s water or wastewater treatment plants.”
 - Incorrect: Hey guys, celebrate July 4.
Correct: Come celebrate July 4 with fellow students.
- Double check holiday spellings thoroughly. The most commonly misspelled is the observance of Veterans Day in November (plural but not possessive).

Exceptions

- Do not capitalize website, internet, online, or email.
- Contractions are OK.
- Eliminate date and time punctuation.
 - June 3 @ 1 pm instead of June 3 at 1 p.m.

Facebook/Instagram/LinkedIn

- Write the first two sentences so that they are able to stand alone. Facebook will truncate longer posts with ellipses. After that, the audience has to click to read more. Make sure the intro they click on makes sense and entices them to continue.
 - The 2017 Maricopa Summer Camps are underway! There is still time to sign up for some fun and interesting subjects at locations across the Valley this June and July! Click for dates: <http://bit.ly/2mjRdYI>
 - Avoid the Summer Slide! The ‘slide’ can happen anytime students take a longer break away from their studies. Here are eight ways to stay sharp: <http://college.usatoday.com/2017/05/16/8-ways-to-stay-sharp-this-summer/>

Twitter

- Do not over abbreviate if you have enough character count. Do not use numbers and letters in place of words to maintain professionalism and clarity.
 - Incorrect: Find the program that’s right 4 U.
Correct: Find the program that’s right for you.
 - Incorrect: R U looking for a career change?
Correct: Are you looking for a career change?

- Write clear messages that are easy to read.
 - Incorrect: Black Kids R 10x More Likely Than White Kids 2 Die From #Guns, Study Says @DiverseIssues @thecityofhbg @HACC_info
<http://amp.timeinc.net/time/4823524/gun-violence-black-children-study/>
 - Correct: Black Kids Are 10 Times More Likely Than White Kids to Die From #Guns via @TIME magazine. <http://amp.timeinc.net/time/4823524/gun-violence-black-children-study/>
- Commonly accepted abbreviations:
 - And - abbreviated as &
 - At - abbreviated as @
 - With - abbreviated as w/
 - Direct Message - abbreviated as DM
 - Information - abbreviated as info
- Use one or two hashtags at most. Make sure the hashtag is spelled correctly. Spell check does not usually pick up on misspelled hashtags. Hashtags do not contain any spaces or punctuation.
 - #setup (not #set-up or #set up).
 - Sign up for Race for the Cure #endcancer.

Sports Writing Style

- It's not necessary to spell out the most common abbreviations on the first reference (for example, NCAA).
- A score of 6–8 (use an en dash). Numbers are used for the score, even if they are less than 10.
- Having a season record of 9-3 (use a hyphen)
- all-star, All-Star
- athletic director
- backboard, backcourt, backfield, backhand, backspin, backstop, backstretch, backstroke
- ballclub, ballgame, ballpark, ballplayer
- Numbers: Some sample uses of numbers: first inning, seventh-inning stretch, 10th inning, first base, second base, third base, first home run, 10th home run, first place, one RBI, 10 RBIs. The pitcher's record is now 6-5. The final score was 1-0.
- Basic summary: This format for summarizing sports events lists winners in the order of their finish. The figure showing the place finish is followed by an athlete's full name, his affiliation or hometown, and his time, distance, points whatever performance factor is applicable to the sport. If a contest involves several types of events, the paragraph begins with the name of the event.
- Box score: the visiting team is always listed first
- Fractions: Two numerals separated by a forward slash. JJ Watt has 2 1/2 sacks. Matt Cain pitched 7 2/3 innings.
- Halftime

- Height, Weight: Use figures for all and spell out inches, feet, pounds, ounces, etc.
Hyphenate adjectival forms before nouns.
 - He is 5 feet 10 inches tall. The 5-foot-10-inch man. The 5-10 quarterback. The baby weighed 5 pounds, 11 ounces. He is a 235-pound fullback.
- MVP: acceptable in all references
- Offseason
- Overtime
- Postgame, pregame, postseason, preseason
- Avoid the redundant new record
- Runner-up, runners-up
- Versus, acceptable to abbreviate as vs.
- Warmup (n.), warm up (v.)
- Weightlifting
- Wild card (n.), wild-card (adj.)

References

- [AP Stylebook](#)
- [Rutgers Editorial Style Guide](#)
- [Tameri Guide for Writers Stylebook](#)