

# WRITING A NEWS RELEASE: A PUBLIC RELATIONS STAPLE

## Chapter 4

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### Introduction

The news release is the one of the tools public relations practitioners use to gain media coverage from journalists and reach their various publics. It is one of the few things that experts agree is a necessary function of a public relations practitioner, as there is great debate about the bounds of what public relations is or is not (Lange, 2003). These one-to-two-page documents serve several functions, such as:

- Announce a newsworthy event
- Contain a crisis
- Launch a new product or service
- Recall an existing product
- Welcome new staff members
- Highlight awards received
- Showcase new construction
- Announce a new partnership

Public relations practitioners write news releases that are clear and concise so journalists can use them. They are often written in AP (or a given “house style”), though can (and should!) be varied based on its media audience. Media outlets can receive hundreds of them a day, if not more. Newsrooms need to quickly decide which are newsworthy to give coverage. At times, media outlets use the news release as is without making changes to it.



Public relations is best when it is nearly invisible. The novice may find this frustrating as operating at the highest levels of skill means that someone else uses their work without the practitioner receiving any credit, but in truth moving news releases smoothly through a journalistic pipeline is primarily about serving the needs of your intended consumer -- the journalist.

The news release is typically part of a broader campaign to enhance a business or an organization’s image. Public relations campaigns require research and planning before the campaign begins and some evaluation process after the campaign ends. Writing a good news release is an important part of the campaign because they help generate publicity.

### Chapter Objectives

- **What is a news release?**
- **How are they written?**
- **Why are they the most commonly used public relations tactic and how are they distributed?**
- **How does a newsroom decide what is news worthy to cover?**

## Research

Poorly written news releases meander around. Sometimes they "bury the lede," which in more modern language means keeping the reader from understanding the main idea of the piece until well into the text. The practitioner needs to know the point of the news release before they start writing it. Center the central questions of news: Who, What, Where, When, followed by either a How or a Why.

Do not wander. Design the release based on the goals of your campaign. Usually, the most critical question is a What -- an event of some kind. Consider all the questions that journalists may have about the event. They are writing for an outlet, and their outlet has a specific audience. Naturally, you are not blind firing a news release at every outlet in a metro (right? of course not), so you should understand what questions journalists would think would be necessary to their audiences and try to answer the most critical ones first. This structure is called the "inverted pyramid," which puts essential information earlier in the piece and less relevant information later.

Answering these questions requires the practitioner to be prepared with all the small details of the client. The practitioner should know all the relevant names and titles of persons involved in the narrative and be prepared to provide pronouncers of names as they think is required. A pronouncer is a parenthetical that provides a phonetic pronunciation of a written word. One co-author of this chapter pronounces his last name Lange (lan-G), while the other co-author pronounces her last name Radosh (ray-dosh). This is especially helpful for broadcast and digital journalists who appear on television, radio, and video.

Ensuring that you are providing journalists both the correct spelling and pronunciation of names within your news release is part of being a detail-oriented practitioner—the small details matter for press releases. Inaccuracy of any kind can become a significant problem as more outlets pick up the news release. Correcting an existing narrative is far more complicated than setting the correct narrative in the first place.

Double-check everything. Your news release is a product of your reputation and credibility. Does the release meet the highest standards of grammar and spelling? Are all the names and dates correct? Do your web hyperlinks work? Are the phone numbers accurate? It is better to take the time to check everything than to release something quickly that is factually inaccurate and then have to clean up after yourself. The practitioner should strive to avoid creating new problems. Leave that to your client.

## Design

Where will this news release go? The practitioner should know what outlets should receive which release. A vast amount of public relations-scented trash sails by outlets every day, ignored because it does not meet their specific needs.

The best way to make sure that an outlet is willing to review your news release is to make personal connections with the journalists assigned to the area your client exists within. Even a large outlet may only have one person assigned to that area at a time, so making those connections is not difficult. A preliminary email introducing yourself and your client to that person before sending them releases is an excellent strategic move. Phone calls are even better and meeting the person face-to-face (or on a video call) is ideal.

Public relations is fundamentally about making connections with others. If you want to be successful in the field, you should cultivate relationships with journalists. They often have tight deadlines for stories. Therefore, you can help make their job easier by providing them with the material they need.





At a minimum, you should know what outlets are suitable for your news release. Some clients may not fit a general news audience and may require you as a practitioner to focus on interest-specific media. Other clients may want you to focus on direct communications with the public, which still requires you to consider what matters to the exact "public" the client typically reaches.

The details, as ever, matter in your communications with an outlet. Know when your contact's deadlines are. Do not send things at the last minute. Give the people you commonly communicate with at an outlet the opportunity to read your release so they can follow up with you with questions as needed. As you work with an outlet for a while, the savvy practitioner will learn what the outlet's most common needs are and try to meet them in future releases. Maybe one outlet is very much interested in good pull quotes, while another outlet uses many high-resolution pictures. Also, if your news release is part of a larger media event (product launch, press conference, etc.), have copies of your release printed and ready for journalists as they arrive. If you treat your contacts well, they will treat you well.

Decide what is your goal of who you want to reach before you send out the release. Success needs to be reasonably attainable and measurable based on where you begin. A small regional client will likely get some interest from local news outlets but will struggle to break through into national news unless they do something nationally newsworthy. Is your goal to get a specific outlet to talk about your client? Is it about placement on an outlet's home page or a longer-form piece in a set interest section in an outlet?

Talk to your client about their goals. Set reasonable expectations based on similar clients operating in your area. What is most important is that you and your client understand and agree on how you measure success. Good measurement will allow you both to effectively plan future communications later.

## Execute

The public relations practitioner writes in the same manner as the journalist. House styles between outlets may vary, so this chapter focuses on design concepts that work across any style. Both journalists and PR practitioners conventionally write in the Associated Press (AP) style. This style guide has rules for abbreviating words, capitalization, numbers, punctuation, and miscellaneous. It is helpful to have an AP style guide out when writing a news release. Please see the appendix for Associated Press (AP) style guide basic rules. News releases are identical in form to a news story, following this flow:

### Headline

A news release should have a snappy headline that is bold and blunt. In the olden days of print journalism, headline length had hard constraints based on the cost of ink and width of pages. Electronic media allows headlines to be longer than in previous eras, but the old ways still work best.

Write a headline that strives to be shorter than ten words. Do not take flexibility as an excuse to write your lead sentence as the headline. The absolute limit should be 15 words, as much longer than that is functionally a sentence. However, what "should" happen and what does happen is often at



odds. Ultimately, what serves the client is what you should do.

The headline should carry forward the main idea of the story without repeating its lead sentence or paragraph. Headlines do not need to follow the grammatical rules of complete sentences but must contain a complete thought. Write in the present tense and focus on verbs (active, if possible), skipping connectors like "a," "and," or "the," but do not start a headline with a verb.

On the internet, the headline may be the only thing people read. To that end, the headline should serve accuracy first and foremost. Do not generate "clickbait" headlines that do not accurately depict the contents of the news release but consider how you may be provocative and entertaining while still serving honesty. Doing so is a tricky line to walk but is more helpful in building long-term engagement.

Another factor in writing headlines is keywords. Consider if there are important keywords that could help make your news release more visible to search engines. While packing a headline with keywords is not advised (as humans DO need to read them), salting in an extra word that boosts search results does little harm.

You need a good hook or angle to capture the attention of the news media. The headline or sub-headline should do this. The sub-headline is right underneath the headline and gives more information to support the headline. It can also serve as a teaser to entice the reader to read the rest of the news release. Remember the media receive many news releases every day. You need to capture their attention and give them a reason to report on your news release.

### **Lead sentence/paragraph**

The first sentence of your news release may determine whether the reader will read the rest. The stakes are very high. Your goal as a practitioner is to answer the most critical question your news release intends to address in the first paragraph. Decide what that question is and construct your news release around answering that question as thoroughly as possible. You probably cannot do all your work in one sentence, but you must strive to write a sentence that gives the reader an incentive to keep reading.



Your lead sentence should strive to be shorter than 25 words. Sometimes going over this limit is unavoidable, but it is a good guideline to follow. Without repeating the headline, it should articulate the central idea of the news release, centering the news questions of Who, What, Where, and When. Writing a good lead sentence also requires balancing the news concerns accuracy, brevity, and clarity: The ABCs of good news writing.

Often, the lead sentence of a news release is talking about a What, typically an event. Sometimes, the news release is talking about a person's deeds, a Who, and so that person becomes the subject of that first sentence.

Where and When are usually in the second part of that sentence, usually one following the other. The point of this exercise is to articulate news value to your target outlet right away so they can decide whether the news release works for them or not.

Metadata matters here too. Cover all the essential points, and then consider including terms in your sentences that could improve your search results. A good tactic here is to see what keywords are used by similar clients so that your release provides at least equal prominence in search results.



### Body <sup>1</sup>

The news release follows the inverted pyramid as previously discussed, and as such, the order of information after the lead sentence is presented in order of priority. The artisan seeks to explain this ordered information in a way that has a natural flow-through to it, but the emphasis is always to deploy information as efficiently as possible to your intended audience.

Quotes from your client are helpful here. Consider the needs of your target outlets: What kinds of quotes would they want with the story you are presenting them? A good direct quote does not restate factual information but adds flavor and context above and beyond the facts themselves. Try to convey your client's personality (or at least their desired brand image) in a quote that provides more detail or context for a factual statement.

Most of your metadata work will be in the body of the news release. An excellent way to improve search results is to work in hyperlinks that point to your client's web presence, as well as the websites of any other entities that are important within a given release. You should

link to the client's web page and social media presence at logical points in the body text, along with the web page and social media links of any other persons discussed in the news release. Avoid overlinking -- one or two links per paragraph is more than enough. Remember, while we are trying to help computers find the release, the primary readership of your news release is still a human being.

If the news release is part of a campaign or larger public relation strategy, you should reuse and update relevant body copy from previous releases to generate consistency and build upon your narrative. There is no reason to reinvent the wheel here, and by including links and copy from previous releases, it can help journalists "catch up" on previous news related to the campaign or strategy.

### Ending

The end of the news release should feature your client's boilerplate paragraph: A paragraph that describes who they are, what they do, and how a journalist may contact them. Boilerplate appears at the bottom of all your client's news releases and is the same thing each time. The practitioner should regularly audit the boilerplate to ensure that any dates are adjusted for the passage of time and confirm that any hyperlinks in the boilerplate have not suffered "link rot" (that is, become non-functional).

The news release should include the practitioner's contact information shortly after the boilerplate. An email address and a working phone number are sufficient.

Some press releases feature an 'endmark' at the very end of the file, horizontally centered below the boilerplate. The most common endmark is '###,' though sometimes you may see '-30-' or '-END-'. The endmark signals to the journalistic reader that there is no more copy to read after that point. Include an endmark unless you receive guidance not to do so.





## Evaluate

After you deploy your news release, you should be able to measure its progress in some way. The news release might have been intended to drive traffic to a campaign landing page on your client's website, which standard web metrics can measure. Other measurements of success might be placing a story in a target outlet or social media engagement around a campaign hashtag. The precise way of measuring success will vary based on the purpose of the release within a campaign, but the important thing is that you can measure an outcome.

Based on how well the news release did in its stated purpose, the practitioner can review their progress. What things went well? Where are places, they could improve? Perhaps the media mix of targeted outlets wasn't correct for the client's goals, or the metadata in the release didn't yield the kind of search visibility that the client wanted. Regular check-ins with the client around campaign benchmarks will allow you to pivot to meet opportunities or avoid possible pitfalls.

As a practitioner, you should also take time to audit your writing skills. Consider taking part in professional development workshops to continue growing your narrative ability. The written word is the foundation of a successful public relations career, and there is always room to refine one's professional ability. The practitioner who has stopped learning has stopped growing, and our field demands constant improvement.



## Newsworthiness

You may wonder how do news organizations decide what is news? In newsrooms, stories are judged on their newsworthiness. This means if the topic is interesting and or important enough for people to want or need to know about it. It is good for public relations practitioners to have an understanding about what journalists consider newsworthy. This will help them in writing news releases and pitching stories.

In most newsrooms newsworthiness means the following six values:

- Timeliness
- Proximity
- Conflict
- Significance/Impact
- Prominence
- Unusual/Human Interest

### Timeliness

In a world where people can receive news immediately, news stories need to be current. If it happened today, it's news. If the same thing happened last week, it's no longer interesting. For example, an apartment building fire that happened this afternoon is newsworthy but if it happened two weeks ago it is not.



### Proximity

There is a saying in news called “NIMBY – Not In My Back Yard.” This means that stories that happen closer to us have more significance. People care about stories that are closer to home. For instance, viewers might care more about a homeless problem in their community than one in another state.

### Conflict

People are drawn to competition, disagreements, and arguments since they make stories more compelling and exciting. This includes when people argue about actions, events, ideas, or policies, we care about it. For example, who will win an election, the Super Bowl, or the war in Afghanistan.

### Significance/Impact

The number of people affected by the story is important. For example, a hurricane in which thousands of people are evacuated is more significant than a hurricane affecting a hundred people.

### Prominence

The actions of prominent people are much more likely to make the news than non-public figures. This includes celebrities, politicians, athletes, and royalties. People care what happens to them, especially when they do newsworthy things such as help with charities or causes. For example, Oprah Winfrey helping to clean a park after being damaged by a hurricane or Bill Gates donating money to the United Way.

### Unusual/Human Interest

Human interest stories appeal to emotion. They aim to evoke responses such as amusement or sadness. Television news programs often place a humorous or quirky story at the end of the show to finish on a feel-good note. Newspapers often have a dedicated area for offbeat or interesting items. For example, if a dog bites a man that is not usually newsworthy but a man that bites a dog could be. Other human-interest stories could be a local person who climbed Mount Everest or won a big lottery and donated his winning to a charity.

### Additional Resources

Now that you have an understanding of what a news release is and how they are used in newsrooms, it is your turn to trying writing them. The following documents are included below to help you write clear, concise, and colorful news releases:

- News Release Checklist
- Sample News Releases
- AP Style Cheat Sheet







## News Release Checklist<sup>2</sup>

- The news release is newsworthy, i.e.:
  - Timeliness
  - Proximity
  - Conflict
  - Significance/Impact
  - Prominence
  - Unusual/Human Interest
- It has a strong headline and a good hook.
- The story does not contain over-explanation or hard to understand scientific terminology.
- It is written to an eighth grade reading level.
- Short sentences and short paragraphs are used.
- Colorful, descriptive and active verbs are used.
- Unnecessary words (especially adverbs and adjectives) are eliminated.
- The press release is precise.
- No statements of opinion are included.
- Relatively simple sentences - with active word order (subject, verb, direct object).
- The first paragraph is specific and concise.
- The story's most unusual or unexpected developments are emphasized.
- The story's most interesting/important developments are emphasized close to top.
- The story's magnitude and impact on readers are emphasized close to the top.
- Complete sentences and the proper tenses are used.
- Proofread the release and double-checked the facts and spelling of names.
- Contact information is included.
- Organization website or social media sites are included.
- Visual (photo) opportunities are noted on the news release.



## Chapter Activities

1. Go to [www.prnewswire.com](http://www.prnewswire.com) and print out an interesting news release. Next label the following in the news release: contact information, headline, lead paragraph, quote, boilerplate, and endmark.
2. Using that same news release decide if you think that news release is newsworthy. Why? What are the newsworthy elements?
3. Look at a local or national newspaper. See if you can find a news story that matches one of the scenarios above. Now take that news story and work backwards by creating a news release. Do you think a news release like the one you created was sent to this newspaper?
4. Still using [www.prnewswire.com](http://www.prnewswire.com) see if you can locate a news release for each of the following scenarios:
  - Announcement of a newsworthy event
  - Launch of a new product or service
  - Welcome new staff members
  - Highlighting awards received
  - Showcasing new construction
  - Notice how the different news releases are written for each of the scenarios

## References

Lange, R. (2003). *Understanding the source credibility of web pages utilizing the contrast between two web pages: A public relations study* (Unpublished master's thesis). Cleveland State University, Cleveland, OH.

1. Singleton, Malik. "The Inverted Pyramid." Malik Singleton, 10 July 2015, <https://malik.silvrback.com/the-inverted-pyramid>.
2. Tapia, Allena. "What You Need to Know about Using the AP Style When Freelancing." The Balance Small Business, The Balance Small Business, 22 Jan. 2022, <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/associated-press-cheat-sheet-1360728>.



## Appendices

### Sample Press Releases & AP Style Cheat Sheet



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (Immediate or Embargoed)

#### Alvernia unveils newly opened downtown Reading location (Headline)



#### New facility boasts 125,000 sq. ft. live-learn and community partner space (Sub-headline)

Reading, Pa. – Sept. 21, 2021 – (Dateline) The Alvernia University and greater Reading community gathered for the public unveiling and ribbon cutting of the newly opened 125,000 square foot living and learning facility at 401 Penn Street in downtown Reading. (Lede) The latest addition to the Alvernia campus is the university’s single largest facility and recently completed its first phase of retrofitting. (Lead Paragraph)

“Community partnership and collaboration has been the driving force in the early success of the Reading CollegeTowne initiative, which today officially has a true home here on Penn Street,” said Alvernia University President John R. Loyack. “It is candidly inspiring to see all our community organizations, elected officials and many others working hand in hand to spark experiential educational and economic activity that will transform lives for the residents of Reading. And, there is so much more to come.” (Quote)

Those in attendance heard from several elected officials and received tours of the newly opened facility. The first phase of the retrofitting project was completed in under a year. After receiving the university’s largest grant in its 62-year history, a \$4 million grant from the Pennsylvania Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program grant, Alvernia officially announced the groundbreaking in January 2021. (Body Copy)

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“Transformative development projects come to a city once in a generation—and that is what Alvernia University’s CollegeTowne means for the City of Reading,” said Pennsylvania State Senator Judy Schwank. “CollegeTowne brings a new vitality to Downtown Reading. It offers new opportunities for students to experience and energize urban life; and, the promise of unique community partnerships that benefit students, residents, and Greater Reading as a whole. I was proud to strongly support this game-changing endeavor.” (Quote)

Part of the completed retrofitting included the ground floor redesign, which features a community gathering place and lounge area, space for the university’s refreshed business and communication programs and establish the home for the O’Pake Institute for Economic Development and Entrepreneurship’s student-powered entrepreneurial lab, which currently helped over 100 local businesses and entrepreneurs over the past year.

The lower level renovations include a collaborative student gathering space, high-tech general-purpose classrooms, spaces for the university’s esports team and cutting-edge labs for the three new engineering programs. The fourth and fifth floors are retrofitted for student housing, with initial designs to house 66 students, with buildouts available to accommodate up to 300 students. There are 1,200 students, staff and faculty interacting with the facility daily.

“The students have already made this building and our community their home,” said Alvernia University Senior Vice President and Provost Glynis Fitzgerald. “Our communication students can learn through conversations with faculty and our partners at BCTV and La Mega. Our business students are engaging with their faculty in these new technology-filled classrooms and interacting with the new tenants in our O’Pake Institute and the Community First Fund. With students, faculty and community members chatting, collaborating and studying in common spaces, this building is very much alive.” (Quote)

As the new school year arrived, Alvernia business and communication students started taking classes in the building in late August, as did the students who made 401 Penn Street their new home.

“As a Reading native, this building represents great opportunities to both current and future students,” said Alvernia accounting student Margarita Cornejo-Jimenez ’22. “My fellow classmates will not only have the ability to experience Reading’s beautiful culture, with its diverse restaurants and stores, but they will also have the ability to meet and connect with other business owners and entrepreneurs from the area. We are proud to call this our new home, and on behalf of Alvernia’s student body, we thank all the supporters of this project who spoke today and the many more who continue their work behind the scenes for opening these doors that will lead us to success in our future careers.” (Quote)

In July, the university announced Community First Fund, La Mega Radio and the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters joined BCTV and Starbucks as the first tenants of the 401 Penn Street location.

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“With every visit to this hub for economic development, with every announcement of a new community engagement partner, and most importantly with every addition of a new experiential learning opportunity for our students, I always seem to return to the word ‘historic’ to describe this project,” said Alvernia University Board of Trustees Chairman Michael Fromm. “This is not just a building; this is catalyst for transformation. I think the future for the city is bright, and Alvernia is delighted to play a key role with Reading CollegeTowne.” (Quote)

The university launched the CollegeTowne initiative in Reading in late 2019. Since its launch, Alvernia purchased a downtown location, completed the first phase of a \$20 million renovation and retrofitting project and has spurred six other development projects in empty or abandoned buildings that is resulted in nearly 1,000,000 sq ft of transformation in the downtown corridor.

#### About Alvernia University (Boilerplate)

Alvernia University is a Catholic comprehensive university with a liberal arts foundation founded by the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters in 1958. The university serves over 3,000 students in Reading, Pottsville and Philadelphia with a unique blend of rigorous liberal arts education, strong technical training in many high demand majors, ever-expanding experiential learning opportunities through study abroad and internship experiences and community engagement through its Franciscan-based community service model.

#### Media Contact (Media Contact)

Kristopher Nolt  
Director of Communications  
Kristopher.Nolt@alvernia.edu  
610-796-XXXX

### (Endmark)





**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (Immediate or Embargoed)**

**Alvernia introduces dual admissions transfer agreement with Community College of Philadelphia (Headline)**

**New partnership eases transitions for Philadelphia's bachelor degree seeking students (Sub-headline)**

Reading, Pa. – Oct. 28, 2021 – (Dateline) Alvernia University and the Community College of Philadelphia have introduced a dual admissions transfer agreement for Philadelphia-area students seeking to continue their undergraduate education. (Lead Paragraph)

The dual admissions transfer partnership allows students to earn their associate degree at the Community College of Philadelphia and then enroll, with junior standing, at Alvernia University's Philadelphia, Pottsville or Reading community-based campuses or online programs to pursue and complete a bachelor's degree. (Body Copy)

"As a university that is deeply committed to the success of transfer and accelerated evening students, we look forward to working with Community College of Philadelphia to provide support services and financial assistance, such as advising and scholarships, to students interested in continuing their educational journey at our rising comprehensive regional university," said Alvernia University President John R. Loyack. (Quote)

The dual admissions agreement provides a seamless and smooth transition from Community College of Philadelphia to Alvernia University. Students who take advantage of the new partnership are able to meet with an Alvernia admission advisor early during their pursuit of an Associate Degree and review transfer guides for programs of consideration and track their associate degree requirements, how it transfers into Alvernia University, and what courses/credits will be remaining to complete their Bachelor's Degree.

"At Community College of Philadelphia, we value the transformative power of both education and real-world learning," said College President Dr. Donald Guy Generals. "With Alvernia University's nationally recognized degree programs in business, nursing and education, our graduates will gain hands-on experiential learning opportunities to supplement their classroom knowledge and be one step closer to the career of their dreams." (Quote)

Additionally, students that declare dual admission will benefit from additional scholarship opportunities that will help lower the cost of their education, have a single point of contact in admissions to assist with their transition and receive points of contact prior to their graduation.

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### About Community College of Philadelphia (Boilerplate)

Community College of Philadelphia is the largest public institution of higher education in Philadelphia and the sixth largest in Pennsylvania. The College enrolls approximately 28,000 students annually. Classes and services are currently being offered remotely. Visit the College at [www.ccp.edu](http://www.ccp.edu).

### Media Contacts (Media Contact)

Alvernia University  
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Director of Communications  
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610-796-XXXX

### (Endmark)



**Alvernia hires inaugural VP for Mission, Diversity and Inclusion (Headline)**



**Seasoned faculty member and diversity officer Mace selected for senior leadership role (Sub-headline)**

Reading, Pa. – Nov. 30, 2021 – (Dateline) Alvernia University names Darryl C. Mace, Ph.D. as its inaugural vice president for Mission, Diversity and Inclusion. Mace brings over 15 years as a scholar, department chair and diversity and inclusion officer to his new role at Alvernia. (Lead Paragraph)

“Darryl’s background as a scholar, educator, diversity officer and campus leader makes him the perfect candidate to assist in the expansion of the university’s mission as well as the institution’s stewardship of our Franciscan identity and core values,” said Alvernia President John R. Loyack. “His data-driven approach, ability to cultivate support and fellowship in both the campus and wider communities and expertise in developing and implementing best practices will greatly benefit Alvernia’s student-centric strategic direction.” (Quote)

In his new role, Mace will be charged with ensuring that mission, diversity and inclusion are central in all decision-making at the university, that Alvernia’s environment is welcoming and supportive for all students, faculty and staff, and that the culture of the university is one in which conversations about challenging issues are safe and educationally productive. He will directly oversee the operations of the university’s Office of Mission and Ministry. (Body Copy)

“From the moment I read the job description for the vice president for Mission, Diversity and

Inclusion, I knew Alvernia University was the right place for me,” said Mace. “I am excited to join the community as we embrace Alvernia’s mission-focused inclusive excellence in continued implementation of the university’s Alvernia Advantage strategic plan.” (Quote)

Mace comes from Cabrini University, where he helped establish and co-chaired the university’s Inclusivity Council and served as the chief diversity and inclusion officer across Cabrini’s academic affairs division. Under his leadership, Cabrini achieved many firsts, including developing an inclusivity strategic plan, a statement of inclusive excellence, a diversity and inclusion climate survey, and a university wide assessment protocol centered on diversity and inclusion strategic goals.

Mace has also led the creation of diversity and inclusion-based programs, including Black Studies, American Studies, Gender and Body Studies, Latin American Studies, Religious Studies and Cultural Studies. Outside of Cabrini, Mace has served as a diversity and inclusion consultant for St. Norbert College, Seba Enrichment Academy and has developed strong partnerships with the Interfaith Youth Core, Laurel House Domestic Violence Prevention Agency, Norristown State Hospital and Hope Community Church of King of Prussia.

A published historian, Darryl Mace’s books include In Remembrance of Emmett Till: Regional Stories and Media Responses to the Black Freedom Struggle (University Press of Kentucky, 2014); American History Through Its Greatest Speeches (ABC-CLIO, 2017); and Rosa Parks: A Life in American History (ABC-CLIO, 2021).

Mace holds a graduate certificate in women's studies and a doctorate in African American history from Temple University. He has also earned bachelor's degrees in History and Speech Communication from Pennsylvania State University. He is the recipient of the 2013 Christian R. and Mary F. Lindback Award for Distinguished Teaching, and a grant from the Interfaith Youth Core for their We Are Each Other’s Racial Equity & Interfaith Cooperation Award.

Mace begins his new appointment in December 2021.

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#### Media Contact (Media Contact)

Kristopher Nolt

Director of Communications

### (Endmark)

## AP Style Cheat Sheet <sup>2</sup>

### Abbreviating Words

These are the rules for common abbreviations following AP style:

- Use only the most commonly recognized abbreviations: The most common,—such as NASA, FBI, and CIA—can be used on all references. Less well-known, but still common ones—such as OSHA and NATO—can be used after you spell out the full name on the first mention. In most cases, however, the stylebook suggests using a generic reference such as "the agency" or "the alliance" for all references after the first.
- Don't put unfamiliar abbreviations in parentheses after the first reference: "The American Copy Editors Society (ACES), for example, would either be repeated as the full name on subsequent references or replaced by a generic reference, such as "the society."
- Use an apostrophe and spell out academic degrees: "She holds a bachelor's degree." Use abbreviations for degrees only when you need to include a list of credentials after a name and set them off with commas: "Peter White, LL.D., Ph.D., was the keynote speaker."
- Abbreviate junior or senior directly after a name, with no comma to set it off: "Justin Wilson Jr."
- Spell out the names of all states when used alone: "He lives in Montana." Abbreviate state names of seven or more letters when used with a city name, with commas before and after the abbreviation: "Pittsburgh, Pa., is a great weekend getaway spot for people who live in Youngstown, Ohio." You'll find the list of acceptable abbreviations under State Names in the hardcover and digital version of the AP Stylebook.
- Be sure to use the stylebook abbreviations, and not the U.S. Postal Service abbreviations for states: The exception is if you are providing a full address, including ZIP code: "Send contributions to Relief Fund, Box 185, Pasadena, CA 91030".
- Spell out the name of a month when it is used without a specific date: "August is too hot for a visit to Florida." Abbreviate months with six or more letters if they are used with a specific date such as "Sept. 28." Always spell out those with five or fewer letters: "May 15." You can find the list of preferred abbreviations under Months in the AP Stylebook.
- Spell out titles used alone: "She was the first female senator from her state." Abbreviate and capitalize most titles when they are used directly before a name: "Sen. Boxer posed hard questions for Rice." To determine if a title is abbreviated, look for an entry for it in the AP Stylebook or check the listing under Titles.
- Spell out titles with names used in direct quotes: The exceptions are Dr., Mr., and Mrs. "Governor Pawlenty is obviously no Jesse Ventura," she said.
- Spell out all generic parts of street names (avenue, north, road) when no specific address is given: "The festival will be held on South Charles Street." When a number is used, abbreviate avenue (Ave.), boulevard (Blvd.), street (St.), and directional parts of street names: "The suspect was identified as Michael Shawn of 1512 N. Mission St."



- In writing news stories, never abbreviate:
  - The days of the week
  - Percent as %
  - Cents as ¢
  - The word "and," unless the symbol & is an official part of a name
  - Christmas as Xmas

## Capitalization

The AP Stylebook uses what's known as downstyle—that is, words are lowercased unless a rule says to capitalize them. If you can't find a rule for capitalizing a word in the stylebook, use it in lowercase. The most familiar capitalization rules are:

- Capitalize common nouns such as party, river, and street when they are part of a proper name for a place, person or thing: For example, the Libertarian Party, the Ohio River. But lowercase these common nouns when they stand alone or in subsequent references: "The party did not have a candidate for president," "She nearly drowned in the river." Lowercase all plural uses of common nouns: the Libertarian and Green parties, the Monongahela and Ohio rivers.
- Lowercase the names of the seasons unless they are used in a proper name: the Summer Olympics.
- Capitalize the word "room" only when used with the number of the room or when part of the name of a specially designated room: Room 315, the Lincoln Room.
- Lowercase directional indicators: The exception is when they refer to specific geographic regions or popularized names for those regions. For example, "the Northeast" or "the Midwest."
- Lowercase formal titles that appear on their own or follow a name: In the latter case, they should be set off by commas. Capitalize formal titles that come directly before a name: "The students were delighted when they heard they would meet President Obama." Never capitalize job descriptions: shortstop, police officer, attorney, and so on.

## Numbers

The AP Stylebook entry for numerals is deceptively short. A close look reveals plenty of rules hiding among the cross-references. The most common are:

- In general, spell out numbers one through nine: Use figures for numbers 10 on up. However, there are many exceptions that always take figures. Most, but not all, involve units of measurement.

Common exceptions include:

- Addresses: 7 Park Place
- Ages, but not for inanimate objects: The 4-year-old cat, the four-year-old car
- Cents: 8 cents.
- Dollars: \$3. Notice that AP style does not include a period and two zeroes when referring to an even dollar figure
- Dates: March 4. Notice that dates take cardinal numbers, not ordinal numbers (don't use 4th)
- Dimensions: 5 foot 2, 5-by-9 cell
- Highways: Route 7

- Millions, billions: 6 billion people
- Percentages: 1 percent. Notice that percent is one word.
- Speed: 8 mph.
- Temperatures: 2 degrees.
- Times: 4 p.m. Notice that AP style does not include a colon and two zeroes when referring to an even hour.
- Spell out numbers used at the beginning of a sentence: "Ten thousand people marched on the capital." Exception: Never spell out years: "1999 was a terrible year for technology companies."
- Use commas to set off each group of three digits in numerals higher than 999. Exception is for years and addresses: "12,650."
- Use decimals (up to two places) for amounts in the millions and billions: Do this if no precise figure is required: "\$3.74 billion."
- Add an "s" but no apostrophe to a number to make it plural: "She kept rolling 7s." The same rule applies to decades: the 1980s. Use an apostrophe on a decade only if cutting off the initial figures: the '80s.

### **Punctuation and Miscellaneous**

- For the most part, AP style follows the same rules of punctuation taught in grade school. However, there are some important exceptions:
- Don't use a comma before a conjunction in a simple series. A simple series is defined as one in which no elements contain the words and or or: "The dinner choices were chicken, cod or beef." Use a comma for series that include elements containing and or or: "The menu offered a choice of bacon and eggs, pancakes, or waffles."
- Use a semicolon to clarify a series that includes a number of commas: Include a semicolon before the conjunction. "Parts for the carrier are made in Tampa, Fla.; Austin, Texas; and Baton Rouge, La."

### **Other Common Style Rules**

- Here are some more AP style guidelines to follow:
- Use a person's full name on the first reference: On subsequent references, use only his or her last name with no title. Second and following references to a married couple should refer to them as Mr. and Mrs.: "Mr. and Mrs. Oakes will honeymoon in Las Vegas." In stories in which two people share the last name, use full names on each reference.
- Time: Express as a figure followed by a.m. or p.m. "8:33 p.m." You do not have to add other words (e.g., night, morning, and so on) to distinguish between day and night. Use "noon" or "midnight" rather than 12 p.m. or 12 a.m.
- Use hyphens to link all the words in a compound adjective: "The five-volume report called for cleaning up the area over a 10-year period." Do not use a hyphen if the construction includes "very" or an adverb ending in "-ly": "a very big project, barely legal procedures."
- To form a plural of a single letter, use "s" and an apostrophe: "All the B's lined up to the right." To form a plural of multiple letters, add "s" with no apostrophe: "She mastered her ABCs in little time."

- To form the plural of words made out of a group of letters, add the letter "s": CDs, ABCs, TVs.
- Titles: Books, movies, recordings, television shows, and similar works are set off in quotation marks, with all principal words capitalized: "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows," "Letters from Iwo Jima," "Memory Almost Full," "Grey's Anatomy." Titles of magazines, newspapers and reference works get no special treatment: Newsweek, The Boston Globe, The Associated Press Stylebook.
- According to AP: It's website, email, and ZIP code.
- <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/associated-press-cheat-sheet-1360728>