

# *The Signpost* Style Guide

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Created December 2014 by Kelsy Thompson and Cassie Lomax



**WEBER STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

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## Introduction

This style guide has been created for Weber State University's newspaper *The Signpost*. There are many writers who contribute to the paper so this guide will be helpful to maintain clarity and consistency throughout.

The immediate audience of this style guide will be *The Signpost's* staff and advisory faculty. However, all readers of *The Signpost* will benefit from the end result that this style guide will help produce.

## References

The references used in this style guide are

- *The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law, Ed. 48*
- Weber State's Style Guide, *Figure of Speech*
- *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary Online*

## Glossary

**Academic Degrees** The preference is to not use abbreviations to describe someone's credentials. Do not use *Dr.* to reference someone with a Ph.D.

*John has a bachelor's degree in psychology.*

Only use abbreviations after a full name, set off by commas.

*John Smith, Ph.D., presented his research.*

**Addresses** Abbreviate *avenue, street, boulevard* when used with a figure. Spell out when used alone.

*They live at 512 26th St.*

*They went to the festival on 25th Street.*

**Ages** Always use a numeral. Use hyphens for ages expressed as adjectives before a noun or as a substitute for a noun.

*She is 5 years old.*

*The 5-year-old went to school.*

**Buildings** Building names should be capitalized.

*David Eccles Conference Center*

*Dee Events Center*

*Elizabeth Hall*

*Engineering Technology Building*

*Heating Plant*

*Hurst Center*

*Information Booth*

*Lampros Hall*

*Kimball Visual Arts Center*

*Lindquist Alumni Center*

*Lind Lecture Hall*

*Marriott Allied Health*

*Maintenance Building*

*McKay Education Building*

*Miller Administration*

*Peery's Egyptian Theater*

*Physical Plant*

*Receiving and Distribution Services*

*Science Laboratory*

*Shepherd Union*

*Social Science*

*Stewart Library*

*Stewart Stadium*

*Stewart Stadium Sky Suites*

*Stewart Wasatch Hall*

*Stromberg Complex is used in reference to entire complex that houses the Swenson Building and the Wildcat Center for Health Education and Wellness.*

*Student Services Center*

*Swenson Building*

*Technical Education Building*

*Tracy Hall Science Center*

*University Village: comprising of Building 1, Building 2, Building 3, Building 4, Building 5 and a community center. Never reference a University Village building on its own.*

*Val A. Browning Center for the Performing Arts*

*Wattis Business*

*Weber State Downtown*

*Weber State University Davis*

*Wildcat Center for Health Education and Wellness*

*Wildcat Village*

## **Campus spaces**

*Ada Lindquist Plaza*

*Alan & Jeanne Hall Development Suite*

*Allred Theater (see Browning Center Allred Theater)*

*Austad Auditorium (see Browning Center Austad Auditorium)*

*Browning Center Archives*

*Browning Center Allred Theater*

*Browning Center Austad Auditorium*

*Browning Center Eccles Theater*

*Browning Center Garrison Choral Room*

*Crime Lab*

*Davis Hospital & Medical Center Nursing Laboratory, Weber State University Davis*

*Dr. Ezekiel R. and Edna Wattis Dumke Legacy Hall*

*E. Rich and Jane H. Brewer Conference Room, Elizabeth Hall*

*Eccles Field*

*Eccles Theater (see Browning Center Eccles Theater)*

*Dr. Elmer H. Erickson Memorial Classroom, Elizabeth Hall*

*Garrison Choral Room (see Browning Center Garrison Choral Room)*

*George S. Eccles Lecture Hall in Elizabeth Hall*

*Haven Barlow Career and Technical Education Suite*

*Haven J. Barlow Student Commons, Weber State University Davis*

*Hetzel-Hoellein Room, Stewart Library*

*Marjorie Ann Miner Faculty Office for Weber: The Contemporary West*

*Marquardt Field House may be used on first reference, but officially is the Robert L. and Annette Marquardt Field House*

*Melba S. Lehner Children's School, McKay Education*

*Ott Planetarium*

*Petersen Plaza*

*Richard F. & Karen W. Fairbanks Conference Room*  
*Robert L. and Annette Marquardt Gallery*  
*Rocky Mountain Power Faculty Office*  
*Shaw Gallery may be used on first reference, but officially is the*  
*Mary Elizabeth Dee Shaw Gallery*  
*Shepherd Union*  
*Shepherd Union Art Gallery*  
*Shepherd Union Atrium*  
*Shepherd Union Ballroom*  
*Shepherd Union Skyroom, now Shepherd Union Room 404*  
*Shepherd Union Fireplace Lounge*  
*Shepherd Union Food Court*  
*Shepherd Union Lair*  
*Shepherd Union Moench Executive Suite*  
*Shepherd Union Wildcat Room*  
*Shepherd Union Wildcat Theater*  
*Smith Lecture Hall*  
*Stacey G. Campbell - R & O Construction Board Room*  
*Stanfield Conference Room*  
*Stevenson Athletics Offices, Stewart Stadium*  
*Stewart Bell Tower Plaza*  
*Swenson Gymnasium*  
*Swenson Natatorium*  
*Tracy Legacy Plaza*  
*Weber State Credit Union Atrium*  
*Weber State University Alumni Association Conference Room*  
*Weber State University Police Department*  
*William & Julia Reagan Media Presentation Room*  
*Willard Z. & Rona Lee Maughan Meeting Room, Elizabeth Hall*

### **Centers on campus**

*Applied Technology Education Center*  
*Bioremediation Center*  
*Boyd K. and Donna S. Packer Center for Family and Community Education*  
*Center for Aerospace Technology*  
*Center for Chemical Technology*  
*Center for Community Engaged Learning (CCEL) (formerly Community*  
*Involvement Center)*  
*Center for Diversity & Unity*  
*Center for Environmental Services*  
*Center for Science & Mathematics Education*  
*Community & Economic Partnership*  
*Counseling and Psychological Services Center*  
*David Eccles Conference Center*  
*Dee Events Center*  
*Educational Technology Center*  
*Eccles Literacy Center*

*General Motors Training Center*  
*Health and Physical Education Center*  
*Learning Support Center*  
*Museum of Natural Science*  
*Multicultural Student Services Center*  
*Science Education Center*  
*Social Science Computer Center*  
*Small Business Development Center*  
*Student Health Center*  
*Student Support Center*  
*Student Success Center*  
*Technology Assistance Center*  
*Testing Center*  
*Tracy Hall Science Center (currently under construction)*  
*Utah Center of Excellence for Chemical Technology*  
*Utah Center for Aeronautical Innovation and Design (UCAID)*  
*Wilderness Recreation Center*  
*William H. Child Center for Entrepreneurship*  
*(Center for Entrepreneurship acceptable in all references)*  
*Writing Center*

**The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints** Per LDS church guidelines, the full name of the church should be used on first reference. *LDS* may be used on second reference. The term *mormon* is not an acceptable use.

### **Colleges within the University**

*College of Applied Science & Technology*  
*College of Science*  
*College of Social & Behavioral Sciences*  
*Dr. Ezekiel R. Dumke College of Health Professions*  
*Jerry & Vickie Moyes College of Education*  
*John B. Goddard School of Business & Economics*  
*Telitha E. Lindquist College of Arts & Humanities*

**Composition titles** Should be placed in quotation marks.

*“The Fault in Our Stars,” “The Star-Spangled Banner,” “Avatar”*

### **Davis campus**

**Departments** Use uppercase when referring to formal department names, use lowercase in informal references.

*Weber State University Department of Fine Arts*  
*the English department*

**Doctor** When used with a medical professional use *Dr.* before a name. When referencing someone with a Ph.D. use *professor*, never doctor.

## Internet

### KWCR 88.1 FM

**Landmarks** Local landmarks should be capitalized when needed and be referred to with their full name.

*Waterfall Canyon*

**Months** When used without a specific date, spell out the month. When used with a specific date, abbreviate January, February, August, September, October, November and December

*She will visit in September.*

*Sept. 11, 2001 is a national day of remembrance.*

|           |       |
|-----------|-------|
| January   | Jan.  |
| February  | Feb.  |
| August    | Aug.  |
| September | Sept. |
| October   | Oct.  |
| November  | Nov.  |
| December  | Dec.  |

**NUAMES** *Northern Utah Academy of Math, Engineering and Science* on first reference. *NUAMES* is acceptable on second reference.

**Numerals** Spell out one through nine, use numerals for 10 and above. The same rule applies to ordinal numbers first-ninth, 10th and above. Always use a numeral with percentages.

*Her three cats had 10 kittens.*

*During the first inning, the team was leading, but by the 10th inning they lost.*

*The study estimated that 5 percent of students get a good night's sleep.*



**Ogden residents** To reference people who live in Ogden

**Profanity** We do not use profanity in *The Signpost*. The AP guidelines for profanity suggests that you try to give the reader a sense of what was said without actually using the word.

*Example: He used an anti-gay slur.*

When it is impossible to avoid quoting the word, replace the letters of the offensive word with hypens, using only the initial letter.

*Example: f---, s---*

**Reporting positions in sports articles** Use box score positions rather than roster positions.

**Titles** Capitalize before a name, lowercase after a name.

*President John Smith met with his friends and family.*

*John Smith, president of the group, met with his friends and family.*

## **Universities**

*Weber State University on first reference. Weber State or WSU are acceptable on second reference.*

*Brigham Young University on first reference. BYU or The Y are acceptable on second reference.*

*University of Utah on first reference. Utah or The U are acceptable on second reference.*

*Utah State University on first reference. Utah State or USU are acceptable on second reference.*

*Southern Utah University on first reference. Southern Utah or SUU are acceptable on second reference.*

*Dixie State University on first reference. Dixie State or DSU are acceptable on second reference.*

**Utahns** Used to reference people who live in Utah

**Weber State University President Charles Wight** Per President Wight, *President Chuck Wight* may be used in all references.

## Punctuation, grammar and usage

### Apostrophe

Plural nouns not ending in S: Add 's: *The women's basketball team*

Plural nouns ending in S: Add only an apostrophe: *the students' tests*

**Brackets** Use parentheses or recast the material.

**Colon** The most frequent use of a colon is at the end of a sentence to introduce lists. Capitalize the first word after a colon only if it is a proper noun or the start of a complete sentence: *She said this: She promised to help them.* Also: *He ate three things: apples, bananas and oranges.*

**Comma** Use commas to separate elements in a series, but do not put a comma before the conjunction in a simple series: *She had three cats, four dogs and a horse.*

**Dash** Use dashes to denote an abrupt change in thought in a sentence: *He followed closely behind her — but not quite stalking — as she went to the train station.*

**Ellipsis** Use an ellipsis to indicate the deletion of one or more words. In general, treat an ellipsis as a three-letter word, constructed with three periods and two spaces.

*"The game ... was played very well," he said.*

**Exclamation point** Use the mark to express a high degree of surprise, incredulity or other strong emotion. Use very sparingly.

**Hyphen** When a compound modified — two or more words that express a single concept — precedes a noun, use hyphens to link all the words in the compound except the adverb *very* and all adverbs that end in *-ly*.

**Parentheses** Parentheses are jarring to the reader, and are a clue that a sentence is becoming confusing. Try to write the sentence another way. Parentheses may be used in quotations to enhance the reader's comprehension.

**Quotation marks** Periods and commas always go inside of quotation marks. The dash, semicolon, question mark and the exclamation point go within the quotation

marks when they apply to the quoted matter only. They go outside when they apply to the whole sentence. Single quotation marks go inside of quoted matter or composition titles within double quotation marks.

*“I’m going to see ‘The Fault in Our Stars,’” she said.*

**Semicolon** Use the semicolon to indicate a stronger separation of thought and information than a comma can convey but less separation than a period implies.

## Commonly misspelled/misused words

Accept/Except

*Accept* means to receive.

*I accept your gift.*

*Except* means to exclude.

*I sent an invitation to everybody, except her.*

Affect/Effect

*Affect* when used as a verb, should be used when it influences something. Using *affect* as a noun should be avoided.

*This fight will affect their relationship.*

*Effect* as a verb means to cause.

*They will effect many changes in the paper.*

*Effect* as a noun means result.

*The effect was disastrous.*

It/it’s

*Its* is possessive.

*My dog loves its bone.*

*It’s* is a contraction that is short for *it is*. If it’s can’t be replaced with *it is* then it is incorrect.

*It’s a sunny day.*

Than/Then

*Than* is mainly used in comparisons.

*My taco is better than your taco.*

*Then* is used mostly with time or in *if...then* sentence structures.

*I woke up and then I had a taco.*

That/Which

*That* should be used for essential clauses that change the meaning of the sentence.

*I recall the day that I met your family.*

*Which* should be used for nonessential clauses that do not change the meaning of the sentence.

*The diamond, which is white, is of poor quality.*

That/Who

*That* should be used when referring to an object.

*That taco is crazy.*

*Who* should be used when referring to a person.

*George, who loves tacos, also loves pizza.*

Who/Whom

*Who* is the pronoun used for humans and animals with names. It is the subject of a sentence.

*The girl who took my taco was blonde.*

*Whom* is used when someone is the object in the sentence.

*Whom do you need to see?*

**Minimizing nominalizations** Nominalizations are nouns created from verbs, and are often called “zombie nouns.” Nominalizations can create wordiness and passive constructions in your writing. It is important to identify zombie nouns in your writing and rephrase your sentence in an active voice.

*There was a loud fight between two cats in my backyard last night.*

In this example *fight* is the zombie noun, and *there was* indicates passivity. Rephrasing the sentence so *fight* becomes the active verb will tighten up the sentence.

*Two cats fought loudly in my backyard last night.*

*Before the beginning of the chapter, I was able to read the title page.*

There's a lot of extra words mucking up this sentence. *Of the* and *was able to* are strong indicators of passivity. The zombie nouns are *beginning* and *read*, so all the extra, weaker verbs can go.

*Before the chapter began, I read the title page.*

## Reducing Wordiness

Delete redundancies and empty phrases. Shorten phrases when possible. Replace long words with shorter words if it doesn't change the meaning of the sentence too much.

Long sentence

*In my opinion, the true fact of the matter is that certain compensated members of this organization are not displeased with the results.*

Revised

*Employees are happy with the results.*

## Writing for *The Signpost*

### Copy flow

Reporters:

1. Write your story and save it in some kind of word-processing program. Make sure to edit it for grammar and spelling to the best of your ability (use spellcheck. It helps).

Double check the spelling of names and places, and read it out loud at least once to make sure it flows well.

2. When it's finished, put your story in Wordpress, assign it to pending review and notify your editor.

- If you are providing your own photos, they should be in the article with full captions when you send it to your editor for review. Upload these through the server, and then email the photo to Kaitlyn so she can prepare it for print.

- If you are receiving photos from one of the photographers, look in Wordpress under ready to publish for your photos and captions. It is your responsibility to put your photos with captions into your article. Double check captions when you move them over into your article and make changes if necessary.

- If you requested a graphic, you are responsible for inputting the graphic into your article unless you have prearranged for one of the graphic artists to put the graphic into your article.

3. If, after your editor reviews it, your article goes to revise, make the changes and discuss them with your editor if you have any questions or concerns. Put it back in pending review once you've finished and notify your editor.

4. If your article passes at the editor level and is put in copy edit, make sure the art is in, if it has not been put in already, unless you are waiting on a graphic. In most cases, your article will be published within 24 hours of receiving copy edit with pictures and captions. Otherwise it will be placed in ready to publish and it is your responsibility to make sure the photos are placed in your article with captions. Once it has art and captions, assign it to copy edit and it will go through a final check and will be published by Kelsy.

\*It is best to make sure photos and captions are in the article by the first time it goes through copy edit, to save extra steps.

#### Editors:

-For your reporters' articles

1. Review the article once it has been placed in pending review. Check it for AP style, grammar, spelling, adherence to the nut graf, stacked quotes, etc. Edit it to the best of your ability. Read it out loud at least once for flow. Make changes as necessary.

2. If the article passes muster, assign it to copy edit.

3. If the article isn't ready for copy edit, make your comments in bold in the text of the article, pointing out what you would like changed and why. Assign it to revise, notify your reporter and work with them as needed to improve the article. After it is revised, review it once more and then bump it up to copy edit and notify Kelsy.

4. If the article is sent to revise from the copy desk, the same process will follow. The copy editor will email and text both the reporter and editor to ensure timely revision.

5. If the article passes at the copy desk and has full art and captions, it will be published by Kelsy. If it does not have art it will be placed in ready to publish, at which point the editor and reporter/photographer must work together to insert the photo and put in

captions. After new captions are put in, send it to copy edit once more for a final check and Kelsy will publish it.

-For your own articles

Follow the same process, but let the editor you are working with (either Skyler or Jean, if that is appropriate) know the article is filed. Please make sure to edit your articles to the best of your ability before putting it in pending review.

### Photographers

1. Create a file in Wordpress to dump all photos for a specific article. Caption to the best of your ability with two lines: What is going on in the picture and who is in it, and the context of the picture within the article. You may need to communicate with the author to help with this. Notify the author once the photos are ready in Wordpress. Put photos on the server at this time as well.
2. Put in pending review for Kaitlyn and notify her.
3. Kaitlyn will review the photos and captions and send them to copy edit.

### Copy Editors

For articles

1. Once an article is received, edit for spelling, grammar, AP style and content. Check all names and titles listed in the article.
2. If article is not ready for publication, leave comments in bold, assign to revise and notify author and the section editor.
3. If the article passes and it has art with full, correct captions publish the article.
4. If there is no art or usable captions, put article in ready to publish and notify author.
5. If photography and captions are inserted after copy edit, edit once more, then publish.

For photos

1. Keep photos in copy edit until the corresponding article has been published with art and correct captions.
2. Once the article has been published, leave a note in photo file that the article has been published and assign it to ready to publish.

## Videographers

1. Upon completion of the package, double check the spelling of names and titles and ensure the titles are correct.
2. Watch the video in its entirety, checking for consistent sound levels and making sure there are no gaps in the images or other simple errors in editing.
3. Credit any outside media in the appropriate manner (on-screen credit or in credits at the end of the package).
4. Save the package and all the raw footage you collected into the appropriate folder on the server.
5. Inform the editor the package is on the server ready to be published.

## **Name check**

1. Get the name in writing
2. Confirm the spelling back to interviewee
3. When writing, keep your finger on the name in notes and on the screen.
4. Once finished, double check every time the name is in the article

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