

Pronoun use

Quite a few people are afraid of the word “me.” Nearly everybody likes “I” and “myself,” but for some reason they are afraid of “me.” For example, instead of saying, “Thanks for inviting my wife and me,” they say, “Thanks for inviting my wife and I,” or “my wife and myself.” If I hadn’t invited their wives, would they say, “Thanks for inviting I” or “Thanks for inviting myself?”

The way to avoid mistakes like this is to take the other person, or persons, out of the sentence. For example:

- “Thanks for inviting my wife and I” becomes “Thanks for inviting I? Me?” The correct choice – me – is obvious to use when the other person is taken out of the sentence.

Grammar styles

- **Don’t use a comma before a conjunction in a series:** the flag is red, white and blue.
- Don’t use extra zeros and use periods with a.m. and p.m. NOT 6:00 p.m. or 6 pm.
- Correct time and date sequence for all events is as follows: 8 a.m.- 5 p.m., March 21, at the outreach and extension center (use year only if different from release).
- **For days of the month,** use only numerals: Aug. 2.
- **Don’t use extra zeros with sums of money:** \$6 not \$6.00

A version of the University Outreach and Extension style guide, which provides a set of basic information helpful to anyone writing a news release or story, can be found online at: <http://outreach.missouri.edu/swregion/news>.

Southwest Region News Service

Southwest Region News Service is a weekly educational news service highlighting University of Missouri Outreach and Extension programs and events with helpful, unbiased and objective information specific to southwest Missouri. Weekly articles that make up the *Southwest Region News Service* are delivered electronically every Friday.

The personal information (or e-mail addresses) of subscribers to *Southwest Region News Service* is never shared with other organizations, subscribers are never sent advertisements, and subscribers never receive attachments (or viruses).

To receive *Southwest Region News Service* for free, and to learn more about everything from 4-H to nutrition and gardening, subscribe by sending your name and e-mail address to: burtond@missouri.edu. Or, go online to: <http://outreach.missouri.edu/swregion>.

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Writing with style



Using the
correct style
for news

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI
OUTREACH AND EXTENSION

Style quick reference guide

Media releases and publications typically follow the writing style used by newspapers known as Associated Press Style. The University of Missouri Outreach and Extension Style Guide provides a method of uniformity based on Associated Press Style. The following is a summation of that style based on frequent problem areas.

Abbreviations

Academic degrees. Avoid abbreviations (B.S., M.S., Ph.D.) Use an apostrophe (and lower case) in the spelled out version: bachelor's, master's.

Abbreviate junior or senior after a name but don't use a comma to set it off: John Jones Jr.

States spelled with six or fewer letters are never abbreviated: Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah.

Postal service abbreviations (i.e. MO.) should be used only when providing a mailing address. Otherwise, the state is abbreviated Mo.

Addresses and highway designations : Abbreviate avenue (Ave.), boulevard (Blvd.) and street (St.) with a complete address. Otherwise, spell out. The correct forms are: 320 N. Guadalupe St., North Guadalupe Street, Third Street and 42nd Street.

For highway designations, use these for highways identified by number: U.S. Highway 1, U.S. Route 1, U.S. 1, state Route 34, Route 34, Interstate Highway 495, Interstate 495. On second Interstate reference only: I-495.

Months with six or more letters, when used with a specific date, are abbreviated. Spell out those with five or fewer letters (March, April, May, June and July).

Spell out the month when it is used without a specific date.

If a group is well known or the acronym for the group is well known, use the acronym on second reference.

Things not to abbreviate

- Names such as Robert (Robt.) or Charles (Chas.).
- Names of the days of the week except in tables.
- Percent as % except in tabular form.
- Cents as ¢.
- And as & unless the & is an official part of a name (Procter & Gamble).
- Christmas as Xmas.
- Professor. Never Prof.

Capitalization and titles

Capitalize proper and common noun when they are part of an official name for place, person or thing. For instance: University Outreach and Extension vs. outreach and extension or Mississippi River vs. winding river.

Directions and regions are, in general, lowercase. Compass directions are lowercase: north, south, northeast and southwest Missouri.

Lowercase spring, summer, fall and winter unless the season is used in a formal name: Winter Olympics.

On first reference, use a person's full name. On second reference, use only the last name.

Capitalize formal titles before a name; lowercase them after a name. The preferred style is to use titles after the name. When referencing a title without a name it is always lowercase. Don't capitalize titles that are only job descriptions: lawyer, welder, mechanic, etc.

Numbers

Fractions. Spell out amounts less than 1, using hyphens between the words: two-thirds, three-quarters.

Generally, spell out numbers less than 10. The exceptions to this rule are:

- Addresses: 6 Maple St.
- Ages, even for inanimate objects: the 2-year-old building.
- Cents: 5 cents.
 - Dollars: \$5
 - Dates: June 6
 - Dimensions: 6 feet tall
 - 3 million people
 - Percentages: 4 percent
 - Proportions: 2 parts water
 - Speed: 7 miles per hour
 - Temperatures: 8 degrees

Use Arabic numerals for numbers with two or more digits. In figures of more than 999, use commas to set off each group of three numerals.

For sums of one million or more, use decimals: \$5.1 million (you may not do this for some annual and quarterly report uses).

Spell out numbers at the beginning of a sentence. Exception: years (1492 was the year Europeans discovered the Americas) and 4-H.