Missouri S&T Style Guide

For writers and editors at Missouri University of Science and Technology

Prepared by the Missouri S&T Communications Department

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Missouri S&T Style Guide
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Introduction

The ***Missouri S&T Style Guide*** was developed by the communications staff of Missouri University of Science and Technology (Missouri S&T) to help campus writers and editors maintain a consistent voice for all written materials that go out under the university's name. The guidelines are based on the *Associated Press Stylebook*, the standard stylebook used by journalists worldwide, with additional support from *Webster's New World College Dictionary* and *Wired Style: Principles of English Usage in the Digital Age.*

In addition to referring to these style guidelines, you should also keep a copy of the *AP Stylebook* and *Webster's New World College Dictionary* handy. Those responsible for electronic communications may also want to purchase a copy of *Wired Style: Principles of English Usage in the Digital Age*.

Bending the AP rules

Text that is written for most external audiences – for example, news releases and articles for departmental newsletters – should closely follow Associated Press (AP) style. But because Missouri S&T publishes many types of publications for a variety of audiences, some of the rules of this style guide may be bent or broken if the occasion warrants.

For example, the general rule of ***down-styling*** – using lowercase except when the uppercase is clearly called for – is the preferred style for most campus communicators. For academic papers or more formal writing, however, copy writers should follow more appropriate reference works, such as the Modern Language Association or American Psychological Association styles.

In addition, copy for ***formal and ceremonial events*** – such as programs, invitations, program notes and the like – often requires greater use of capitalization and less abbreviation.

Advertisements and promotional materials may also require more frequent use of capitalization. A rule of thumb to go by is to consider the audience. The more formal the occasion, the more likely you are to require a more formal style of writing.

As a general rule, however, **when in doubt, lowercase nouns.** Academics love to capitalize titles, departments, degree programs and more. But when writing for external audiences, keep the capitalization to a minimum. In general, capitalize proper nouns and lowercase everything else.

So, instead of writing:

> *Dr. Sam Jones, a Professor of Chemistry, received an Honorary Degree at Saturday's Commencement Ceremonies.*

Try this:

Dr. Sam Jones, a professor of chemistry, received an honorary degree at Saturday's commencement ceremonies.

Chapter 1: Academic degrees, departments and titles

Universities and their academic programs present all kinds of writing challenges. Here are some guidelines pertaining to academic programs and titles:

academic degrees. Lowercase, except when using abbreviations. The preferred form is to avoid abbreviation and instead use a phrase such as: "the student was awarded a bachelor of science degree in aerospace engineering" or "John Jones, who has a doctorate in civil engineering."

"Bachelor of science degree" and "master of science degree" are preferred. Use an apostrophe in "bachelor's degree," "master's degree," etc.

- ***For news releases***, use such abbreviations as B.S., M.S., Ph.D. and D.Eng. only when the need to identify many individuals by degree on first reference would make the preferred form cumbersome. Use these abbreviations only after a full name – never after just a last name.

- ***For*** **Missouri S&T Magazine** ***and departmental newsletters***, the preferred form for academic degrees is to list the abbreviation of the department (see abbreviations, below) followed by an apostrophe and the two-digit abbreviation of the year of graduation. For example, write: *The Havener Center is named for Texas businessman Gary Havener, Math'62.*

When used after a name, an academic abbreviation is set off by commas: "Daniel Moynihan, Ph.D., spoke."

To avoid redundancy, do not precede a name with a courtesy title for an academic degree and follow it with the abbreviation for the degree in the same reference:

> *Incorrect*: "Dr. Sam Jones, Ph.D."
> *Correct*: "Dr. Sam Jones, a chemist."

Also, do not precede the name of a professor with both the title "Dr." and "professor." Use one or the other, but not both.

> *Incorrect*: "Speakers included Missouri S&T ceramic engineering Professor Dr. Gregory Hilmas."
> *Correct*: "Speakers included Missouri S&T ceramic engineering Professor Gregory Hilmas."

Correct: "Dr. Gregory Hilmas, professor of ceramic engineering."

When in doubt about the proper abbreviation for a degree, follow the first listing in *Webster's New World College Dictionary*.

academic degrees, abbreviations. For *Missouri S&T Magazine* and departmental newsletters, the following abbreviations of academic degrees are used when degree identification is needed for an alumna or alumnus:

Academic degree abbreviations

Degree name When spelling out degree names, lowercase all except English (unless you're starting a sentence with the degree name).	Abbreviation
aerospace engineering	AE
applied and environmental biology	AEBio
applied mathematics	AMth
architectural engineering	ArchE
biological sciences	BSci (LSci for graduates before 1998)
biomaterials	BMat
business/business and management systems	Bus (MgtSys for graduates before 2001), MBA
civil engineering	CE
ceramic engineering	CerE
chemical engineering	ChE
chemistry	Chem
computer engineering	CpE
computer science	CSci
earth sciences	Earth
economics	Econ
electrical engineering	EE
engineering mechanics	EMch
engineering management	EMgt
English	Engl
environmental engineering	EnvE
explosives engineering	ExpE
geological engineering	GeoE
geology and geophysics	GGph
geotechnics	Gtech
interdisciplinary engineering	IDE
history	Hist
information science and technology	IST
life sciences	LSci (BSci for graduates after 1998)
manufacturing engineering	MfgE
mathematics	Math
mechanical engineering	ME
metallurgical engineering	MetE
mining engineering	MinE
nuclear engineering	NucE
petroleum engineering	PetE
philosophy	Phil
physics	Phys
psychology	Psyc
systems engineering	SysEng
teacher education program	Teach

technical communication	TComm

academic departments. Use lowercase except for words that are proper nouns or adjectives: "the department of history," "the history department," "the department of English and technical communication," "the English and technical communication department."

It is more concise to drop the "of" and flip-flop a department's name; thus the "department of electrical and computer engineering" becomes the "electrical and computer engineering department," or the "department of mechanical and aerospace engineering" becomes the "mechanical and aerospace engineering department."

Do not abbreviate "department" in any usage. For most non-academic departments, also use lowercase.

Academic and non-academic departments

Department name	Abbreviation/shorthand
academic affairs	
accounting/fiscal services	accounting
Administrative Services	
admissions	
Air Force ROTC	aerospace studies
alumni affairs and constituent relations	alumni, alumni affairs
Army ROTC	military science
arts, languages and philosophy	ALP
athletics and physical education	athletics
biological sciences	
budget office	
building services	
business and information technology	BIT
business services	
career opportunities and employer relations	COER
Center for Infrastructure Engineering Studies	CIES
chancellor's office	
chemical and biological engineering	

chemistry	
civil, architectural and environmental engineering	CArE, civil engineering, architectural engineering, environmental engineering
Cloud and Aerosol Sciences Laboratory	CASL
communications	
counseling	
Center for Entrepreneurship and Outreach	CEO
Center for Environmental Science and Technology	CEST
Center for Technology Enhanced Learning	CTEL
disability support services	
distance and continuing education	DCE
development	
development records	records
development research	research
economics and finance	economics
electrical and computer engineering	ECE, electrical engineering, computer engineering
electronic marketing communications	EMarComm
Electronic Materials Applied Research Center	EMARC
Energy Research and Development Center	ERDC
Engineering Education Center	EEC
engineering management and systems engineering	EMSE, engineering management, systems engineering
English and technical communication	English, technical communication
enrollment management	EM
environmental health and safety	EHS
Environmental Research Center	ERC
Freshman Engineering Program	FEP, freshman engineering
geological sciences and engineering	GSE
global learning	
golf course	
graduate studies	

history and political science	
human resource services	human resources, HR
information technology	IT
Innovation Park	
institutional research	
Intelligent Systems Center	ISC
international affairs	IA
KMST	
Leach Theatre	
library and learning resources	library
Materials Research Center	MRC
materials science and engineering	MSE
mathematics and statistics	math
mechanical and aerospace engineering	MAE, mechanical engineering, aerospace engineering
Miner Alumni Association	alumni association
mining and nuclear engineering	MNE, mining engineering, nuclear engineering
Missouri Enterprise	
Missouri Local Technical Assistance Program	LTAP
Missouri Transportation Institute	MTI
new student programs	
office of technology transfer and economic development	OTTED, tech transfer
phonathon	annual giving
physical facilities	
physics	
power plant	
pre-college programs	
printing and mail services	
provost's office	
psychological science	
public relations	PR
publications	
Regional Professional Development Center	RPDC
registrar	
research and sponsored programs	

residential life	
Rock Mechanics and Explosives Research Center	RMERC, Rock Mechanics
Speech Communication Center	
Student Affairs	
Student Design and Experiential Learning Center	SDELC, Student Design Center
student diversity programs	
student financial assistance	
student health services	
student life	
teacher education program	
Technology Development Center	
technology transfer	
undergraduate studies	
university police	campus police, S&T police
University Advancement	UA
Video Communication Center	VCC
Women's Leadership Institute	WLI
Writing Center	

academic divisions. Capitalize all divisions, centers, laboratories, institutes and ROTC programs when using the full, proper name. "The center," "the division," "the institute," etc., is acceptable on second reference, but should not be capitalized. In news releases, the informal departmental or divisional name ("electrical and computer engineering department" instead of "department of electrical and computer engineering," or "student affairs division" instead of "Division of Student Affairs") is the preferred use on second reference. Usually, offices are lowercase ("chancellor's office" instead of "Chancellor's Office" or "Office of the Chancellor"). Centers and institutes are capitalized when the full name is used ("Center for Infrastructure Engineering Studies," "Graduate Center for Materials Research," etc.). Also, "Air Force ROTC" and "Army ROTC" are the preferred references for these academic programs.

Missouri S&T divisions are as follows:
    Division of Administrative Services
    Division of Student Affairs
    Division of University Advancement

academic and administrative titles. Capitalize and spell out formal titles such as "professor," "chancellor," "chair," etc. when they precede a name. Lowercase elsewhere.

advisor. This spelling differs from AP style, which recommends *adviser*. In keeping with common academic usage, however, use *advisor*.

alumnus, alumni, alumna, alumnae. Use "alumnus" ("alumni" in the plural) when referring to a man who has graduated from the university. Use "alumna" ("alumnae" in the plural) when referring to a woman who has graduated from the university. Use "alumni" when referring to a group of both men and women.

The term "alum" may be used in informal writing but is best avoided. If you must use the term, make sure your audience knows you're writing about a person, not the chemical compound of the same name.

chairman, chairwoman, chair. The term "chair" is preferred over "chairman" or "chairwoman." Do not use "chairperson." Capitalize as a formal title before a name: "mechanical and aerospace engineering Chair James Drallmeier," "history department Chair Larry Gragg." But after a name, the title is lowercase: "Dr. James Drallmeier, chair of the mechanical and aerospace engineering department." Do not capitalize as a casual, temporary position: "meeting chair Robert Jones."

course numbers and courses. Use Arabic numerals and capitalize the subject when used with a numeral: "English 160," "Chemistry 1," etc. When writing about specific courses, write the formal names and capitalize: "Technical Writing," "Introduction to Chemistry," etc.

Curators' Professor, Curators' Teaching Professor. Always capitalize, including when preceding or following the name of any Missouri S&T (or other University of Missouri campus) faculty member holding the title. Examples: "Dr. Walter Eversman, Curators' Professor of mechanical and aerospace engineering." "Dr. Delbert E. Day is a Curators' Professor emeritus of ceramic engineering." "Curators' Teaching Professor Dee Haemmerlie Montgomery."

doctor. For faculty members who hold doctoral degrees, the courtesy title "Dr." may be used in first reference on news releases, ***but not for* Missouri S&T Magazine *or department newsletter copy***. On second reference, use the last name only. Do not, however, change the use of courtesy titles in direct quotes. For example, if someone is quoted as saying, "Dr. Bogan's film class taught me valuable lessons about the meaning of life," do not alter the quote.

emeritus. Place "emeritus" after a formal title and follow the guidelines for all other academic and administrative titles. "Curators' Teaching Professor Emeritus Lawrence Christensen" or "Doug Mattox, professor emeritus of ceramic engineering." Also: "Dr. Lawrence Christensen, Curators' Teaching Professor emeritus of history." Note that *emeritus* is not capitalized because it is not part of the formal title.

endowed chairs and professorships. Capitalize full names of endowed chairs or professorships. For example: "Dr. J. David Rogers, Karl F. Hasselmann Missouri Endowed Chair of Geological and Petroleum Engineering," or "Dr. Daniel Oerther, John and Susan Mathes Missouri Distinguished Chair of Civil Engineering." Note that the academic specialty is capitalized because it is part of the formal title.

fellow. Capitalize if part of a formal title, such as "American Society for Engineering Education Fellow." Lowercase elsewhere.

students. Avoid such terms as engineers, lawyers, scientists and teachers when referring to students of various disciplines. Use "engineering students" or "engineering majors," for example.

Chapter 2: Missouri S&T or Missouri University of Science and Technology?

The university's official, formal name is "Missouri University of Science and Technology." This name should be used on first reference in all formal, official communication and marketing materials. Note that the *and* is spelled out. Do not substitute the ampersand (&).

>   ***Correct:*** Missouri University of Science and Technology
>   ***Incorrect:*** Missouri University of Science & Technology

Note, however, that the primary version of the official logo uses the wording "University of Science & Technology" beneath the large "Missouri S&T" mark. This is part of the logo design. Therefore, the use of the ampersand (&) is an integral part of the logo.

For headlines, photo captions and other tight spots, shorter is always better. Thus, "Missouri S&T" is preferred.

- For headlines, when space is tight, use "S&T" but not "MS&T," "MST" or similar abbreviations.
- For news releases and other official written materials, use "Missouri University of Science and Technology" on first reference and "Missouri S&T" on subsequent references.
- When writing to audiences familiar with the campus – such as alumni or students – "Missouri S&T" is acceptable in all references.

For forms on computerized applications, such as Peoplesoft or other applications where the number of characters is limited, use "MO S&T" if six character spaces are permitted. Note the space between "MO" and "S&T." The spacing is important to avoid confusion with the acronym "MOST." If five or fewer spaces are permitted, "MST" is acceptable.

As a general rule, do not use "MUST," "MS&T," "MO S&T" or "MST,except for forms on computerized applications, as explained above. Also, it is acceptable to use "mst," in lowercase, for official Missouri S&T web and email addresses. See ***Internet terms***.)

university identification. Use "University of Missouri System" when referring to the central administration of all four UM campuses. On second reference, use "UM System" or "university system" when referring to the central administration of the four campuses or the Board of Curators. For first reference of any UM campus other than Missouri S&T, write the complete

name: "University of Missouri-Columbia" (not "Missouri University" or "University of Missouri"), "University of Missouri-Kansas City" and "University of Missouri-St. Louis." On second and subsequent references, the following rules apply:

- **For the University of Missouri-Columbia**: MU is acceptable on second reference. This is in keeping with the University of Missouri Board of Curators' Nov. 29, 2007, decision to allow the Columbia campus to use "University of Missouri," "MU" or "Mizzou" on second and subsequent references.
- **For the University of Missouri-Kansas City**: UMKC is acceptable on second reference.
- **For the University of Missouri-St. Louis**: UMSL is acceptable on second reference.

Use the lowercase "university" in the generic sense. For example, write: "The university's Campus Performing Arts Series will host a performance of *Evita* tonight in Leach Theatre of Castleman Hall."

Chapter 3: Internet terms

Missouri S&T uses a combination of *Wired* and *Associated Press* styles when writing about the Internet. Because most of our audiences are Internet-savvy, we feel more comfortable embracing the less formal style of *Wired* as opposed to the conservative approach of the *Associated Press Stylebook.*

Below are some commonly used Internet terms:

blog. Acceptable on all references. Originally a shortening of the word weblog, *blog* is now commonly used. Avoid overuse of the term and similar buzzwords (i.e., *blogosphere*).

email. Always lowercase, not hyphenated. Acceptable on all references. In keeping with online conventions, all Missouri S&T email addresses should be written in lowercase, as follows:

joeminer@mst.edu

Not:

JoeMiner@mst.edu

gateway. The term used to describe Missouri S&T's main website. "Missouri S&T's gateway is www.mst.edu." Use "website" instead of "gateway" when writing to audiences unfamiliar with the latter term.

homepage. Always lowercase. Should be written as one word.

Internet. Always capitalized. Write "the Internet" when referring to the global network of computers. (*Wired* recently changed its style guide to lowercase "internet," but the majority of news organizations continue to capitalize the term.)

online. Always lowercase. One word, both as a noun ("Missouri S&T students like to communicate online") and an adjective ("Online communications is becoming more popular with college students everywhere").

URL. The address of a site on the web. Acceptable on all references. Do not use "Uniform Resource Locator." For general audiences, it's better to write "web address" instead. "Missouri S&T's web address is www.mst.edu." Writing "http://" before the web address may be necessary

at times to avoid confusion for readers who may be inclined to insert a "www" before a web address when that is not required (for example, write "http://chancellor.mst.edu" instead of "chancellor.mst.edu").

web. Always lowercase. Preferred use for referring to the World Wide Web.

website. One word, lowercase. Preferred use for referring to a specific site on the World Wide Web. "http://" is no longer necessary. Just write "www.mst.edu" or "news.mst.edu."

For more information on Internet terms, refer to *Wired Style: Principles of English Usage in the Digital Age*, by Constance Hale and Jessie Scanlon.

Chapter 4: Buildings and building names

Capitalize the official names. "Students will meet at 6 p.m. for a candlelight vigil on the lawn outside the Havener Center." "Toomey Hall houses Missouri S&T's mechanical and aerospace engineering programs."

Buildings on the Missouri S&T campus

(* denotes residence halls)

Allgood-Bailey Stadium	Missouri S&T Football Stadium
Altman Hall*	
Butler-Carlton Civil Engineering Hall	Civil Engineering Building, CE Building, CE, Butler-Carlton Hall, CE Hall
Campus Housing and Dining Services	
Campus Support Facility	CSF
Castleman Hall	
Centennial Hall	
Chancellor's Residence	
Computer Science Building	CS Building
Curtis Laws Wilson Library	Wilson Library, Missouri S&T Library
Custodial and Landscape Services Building	
Dangerous Materials Storage Facility	
Emerson Hall	Electrical Engineering Building, EE Building, EECH
Engineering Management Building	
Engineering Research Laboratory	ERL
Experimental Mine Facility	Experimental Mine
Farrar Hall*	
Fitness Center	
Fulton Hall	
Gale Bullman Multi-Purpose Building	Multi-Purpose Building, Bullman Building, Bullman Auditorium
General Services Building	
Harris Hall	
Hasselmann Alumni House	
Havener Center	
Holtman Hall*	
Humanities and Social Sciences Building	H-SS, H-SS Building

Interdisciplinary Engineering Building	IDE Building
Kelly Hall*	
Kummer Student Design Center	Student Design Center
McAnerney Hall*	
McNutt Hall	
Miner Dome Indoor Practice Facility	Miner Dome
Missouri S&T Baseball Field	
Missouri S&T Nuclear Reactor	The Reactor, MSTR
Missouri S&T Observatory	
Missouri S&T Soccer Field	
Missouri S&T Softball Field	
Norwood Hall	
Parker Hall	
Physics Building	
Pine Building	
Power Plant	
Quadrangle Residence Halls*	The Quad
Rayl Cafeteria	
Residential College 1*	
Residential College 2*	
Rock Mechanics and Explosive Research Center	RMERC
Rolla Building	
Schrenk Hall	
Solar Village	
South Central Regional Professional Development Center	RPDC
Southwestern Bell Cultural Center	
Straumanis-James Hall	Materials Research Center, MRC
Student Health Complex	Student Health, SHC
Student Recreation Center	
Temporary Facility A	
Thomas Jefferson Residence Hall*	TJ Hall
Toomey Hall	

centers, institutes and laboratories. Capitalize complete names. For example: "The Center for Aerospace Manufacturing Technologies received a $5 million allocation from the U.S. Defense Department." A shortened form or acronym is acceptable on second reference. If the acronym may be unfamiliar to your audience, consider placing it in parentheses after the full name on first reference. For example: "The Center for Aerospace Manufacturing Technologies (CAMT) received a $5 million allocation from the U.S. Defense Department."

dormitory. Use "residence hall" instead.

Chapter 5: Miscellaneous

entitled. A right to do or to have something, not a synonym for "titled" or "called." "The employees are *entitled* to receive benefits." "The book is *titled* 'The Associated Press Stylebook.'"

fraternities, sororities and service organizations. Capitalize the proper names: "Lambda Chi Alpha," "Phi Beta Kappa," "Phi Eta Sigma." Also capitalize words describing membership: "He is a Legionnaire, a Lion, an Odd Fellow, an Optimist, a Phi Beta Kappa and a Rotarian." Capitalize the formal titles of officeholders when used before a name.

nationalities and races. Capitalize the proper names of nationalities, peoples, races, tribes, etc.: *Arab, Arabic, African, African American, American, Asian American, Caucasian, Cherokee, Chinese* (both singular and plural), *French Canadian, Gypsy (Gypsies), Hispanic, Japanese* (singular and plural), *Jew, Jewish, Latin, Latina, Latino, Mexican, Mexican American, Native American, Nordic, Oriental, Sioux, Swede, etc.*

Lowercase *black* (noun or adjective), *white,* etc.

Consult the *Associated Press Stylebook* for further clarification.

sexism. Avoid masculine references "he" and "his" when the description assumes that both sexes are involved. If necessary, change construction from singular to plural to avoid sexist language. For example, write: "Students should contact their advisor for additional information," rather than "A student should contact his advisor..."

Women should receive the same treatment as men in all aspects of writing. Physical descriptions, sexist references, demeaning stereotypes and condescending phrases should not be used.

To cite some examples from the Associated Press, this means that:

   • Copy should not assume maleness when both sexes are involved, as in, "Jackson told newsmen" or in "the taxpayer ... he" when it can easily be said "Jackson told reporters" or "taxpayers ... they."
   • Copy should not express surprise that an attractive woman can be professionally accomplished, as in: "Mary Smith doesn't look the part, but she's an authority on..."
   • Copy should not gratuitously mention family relationships when there is no relevance to the subject, as in: "Madeline Albright, a doughty grandmother, said today..."

• Use the same standards for men and women in deciding whether to include specific mention of personal appearance or marital and family situation.

In other words, treatment of the sexes should be even-handed and free of assumptions and stereotypes. For more information, consult the *Associated Press Stylebook* under the entries for **courtesy titles; divorcee; man, mankind,** and **-persons.**

sexual orientation. The term *gay* is used to describe men and women attracted to the same sex, though *lesbian* is the more common term for women. These terms are preferred over the term *homosexual* in all references.

Transgender refers to people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. Use the pronoun preferred by the transgender individual.

sports identification. Missouri S&T's sports teams compete in the Great Lakes Valley Conference (GLVC) effective with the 2005-2006 athletic season. Prior to 2005-2006, the campus competed in the Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association (MIAA).

St. Pat's Celebration, St. Pat's. The official name of the weeklong celebration at Missouri S&T is "the St. Pat's Celebration." "St. Pat's" is often acceptable on second and subsequent references. The annual event, held every March, usually during the week that includes St. Patrick's Day, began in 1908. Although he is not recognized by religious organizations as the official patron saint of anything, engineering students at Missouri S&T and elsewhere consider St. Patrick to be the unofficial "patron saint of engineers." The first student event to celebrate St. Patrick as the patron saint of engineers was held in 1903 at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Chapter 6: Headlines and photo captions

Headlines are the most visible and best-read sections of most publications and websites. They're also the portion of a story on which the writer or editor usually spends the least amount of time. That's unfortunate, because a creative and informative headline can draw a reader into a story, while a dull, uninformative headline can repel a reader.

The best headlines provide accurate, complete information quickly and attractively. The occasional use of puns, alliteration, balance and contrast, rhymes, proverbs, or twists of clichés, quotations or titles will help your headlines shine. But be careful not to rely on puns or playful wording at the expense of conveying information. Also, when writing for online audiences, an informative headline containing key words will more likely be picked up by search engines and will guide readers to your article, whereas a clever headline that obscures the nature of the article may be overlooked by Internet surfers searching for a specific topic.

A good headline will:
– attract the reader's attention
– describe the story's mood
– set the tone of the publication
– summarize the story
– help readers index a page's contents

Tips for writing good headlines:
– Read the story more than once before writing the headline.
– Build the headline around key words from near the top of the story, but don't copy the lead.
– Make headlines complete. Be sure to have a subject and a predicate.
– Avoid the passive tense. Use active verbs.
– Be as specific as possible.
– Avoid label headlines ("Honor Roll recipients") except on obituaries or when space is limited.
– Always verify facts and be sure the headline doesn't have a double meaning.
– Use present tense, even for events in the past.
– Write "to," not "will" for present tense. "Missouri S&T to offer new summer courses."
– Use single quotes in headlines – never double quotes.
– Use a comma in place of the word "and."
– Abbreviate sparingly and avoid jargon; use only abbreviations most people would recognize.

Avoid:
– most adjectives and adverbs

– questions

– slang

– overworked or clichéd words

– opinion or editorializing

Never:

– abbreviate the university's name as "MST, "MUST" or "MS&T" in headlines, photo captions or elsewhere in printed or online materials. "Missouri S&T" is the preferred usage for headlines. If space is an issue, "S&T" is an acceptable abbreviation ("S&T to offer new summer courses").

– invite libel or contempt with headlines.

– begin with a verb, eliminating the subject.

– use names that aren't easily recognizable by all readers. If names are unrecognizable, use titles instead.

– use a speaker's name, what the speaker said is more important.

– use extra words just to fill space.

– repeat words.

– split nouns and modifiers or verb forms and prepositional phrases over two lines unless space is the main consideration.

– abbreviate months unless followed by a date; days of the week; a title without a person's name; a person's name; or the words "department," "association" or "company" when used without the entity's full name.

When space is limited:

– "Missouri S&T" is the preferred name for headlines. If space is an issue, however, "S&T" is an acceptable abbreviation ("S&T to offer new summer courses"). Never abbreviate the university's name as "MST, "MUST" or "MS&T" in headlines, captions or elsewhere in printed or online materials.

– use numerals instead of spelling out figures.

– use a percentage sign instead of spelling out the word.

– abbreviate United States, a state or a university name. For example: *S&T one of top 10 US universities*, or *S&T named top university in Mo.* No periods are used when abbreviating *United States* (US) in headlines.

– abbreviate association, department or company if used with the full name.

Writing photo captions

Like headlines, photo captions – or "cutlines" – should satisfy skimmers who don't read the entire story. They also should help connect a photograph to the story, intrigue readers, dramatize the

story or pull the reader into the story.

Every photograph should have a cutline, including specific information about the photo, describing action when necessary. When possible, cutlines should provide the reader information not contained in the story.

Make sure photographs match cutlines and everyone is identified.

Tips:
– Always look carefully at the photo before writing the cutline.
– Don't editorialize or include your opinion. Smiling students fishing from a dock may appear to be having a good time, but don't imply that in your cutline.
– Be specific. "A 50-foot sailboat" is better than "a big boat."
– Write "from left" rather than "from left to right."
– Write complete sentences.
– Present tense is preferred, but past is acceptable. Never mix verb tenses in the same sentence.

Photo credits/copyright information
Be sure to provide photo credits or copyright information when appropriate. Typically, the photo credit or copyright information appears in small type beneath the lower right-hand corner of a photograph.

Chapter 7: Writing for online audiences

More and more of our audiences are going online to get their news and information. At the same time, many online readers skim for information and often come across our websites because they are looking for specific information. Therefore, it's important that we make it easy for them to find what they're looking for.

The following tips for writing to an online audience are condensed from "A Dozen Online Writing Tips," by Jonathan Dube, editor of CyberJournalist.net.

1. **Think about presentation.** Writing for the web involves writing in "chunks" of information. It also requires writers to think differently about how they present information. Consider options to enrich the reader's experience. Do you have video and audio to accompany your story? If so, provide links or embed the content in your site. How about related articles? Writing for an online audience requires you to add value to the traditional news or feature article. If you're writing about a particular student group, provide a link to the group's website or to previous articles on the subject.

2. **Get to the point.** Don't bury your "lead" – the main point of your story. Summarize your story in the first paragraph so that readers may skim and get the important information first. Then provide background and details in subsequent paragraphs.

3. **Keep it tight.** Writing for online audiences "should be a cross between broadcast and print – tighter and punchier than print, but more literate and detailed than broadcast writing," Dube advises. Write in the active voice, using simple, declarative sentences – and don't be afraid to use a bit of humor while you're at it. "Strive for lively prose," Dube says, but "don't forget that the traditional rules of writing apply online."

4. **Break it up.** Chop up large blocks of text, which are hard to read on a screen. Use more subheads, bulleted lists, and graphics to break up the text.

5. **Don't fear the link**. People actually prefer sites that provide worthwhile links. You won't lose visitors by providing good linked content.

For more information on Internet terms, refer to *Wired Style: Principles of English Usage in the Digital Age*, by Constance Hale and Jessie Scanlon.

Eight simple rules for writing your blog

Missouri S&T bloggers are some of the best spokespeople and ambassadors for our university. While it's important that bloggers follow the above guidelines on writing for online audiences, the following eight simple rules can help bloggers create more engaging content.

1. **Write in the first-person voice.** Think of the blog as your diary. You may be writing a blog for your department, but you are your department's "voice" to the online world. So, keep it conversational, and write in your own voice, not the voice of the "institution."

2. **Use the active voice.** Use active, "action" verbs, and follow the simple "subject-verb-object" construction.

   Active voice (good): "We will post the updated policies and procedures manual on our office's website next Tuesday."

   Passive voice (bad): "The policies and procedures manual has been updated and will be posted on our office's website next Tuesday."

   Not sure how to write in the active voice? Consult *The Associated Press Style Manual* or read recipes and nursery rhymes. The best use active verbs ("stir," "chop," "boil," "baste," etc.) and are written in the active voice ("Little Miss Muffet sat on a tuffet," "Jack and Jill went up the hill," and so on).

3. **Use strong verbs.**

4. **Keep a conversational tone.**

5. **Use personal anecdotes.** There's nothing wrong with talking about your personal interests, your work experiences, etc., when posting on your department's website. Just remember to keep it relevant to the mission of your blog and to follow the Missouri S&T social media guidelines.

6. **Tell stories.** It's a great way to convey information in an interesting way.

7. **Use captivating first lines and headlines.**

8. **Follow through with the conversations.** Take the time to respond to the comments you receive on your blog.

Blogs should:

1. Invite conversation.
2. Inspire comments.
3. Acknowledge contributions from others.
4. Widen the audience with links to other blogs or websites of interest.
5. Encourage others to speak to wider audiences on behalf on the university.