

Graphics and interactive projects are produced for breaking news and enterprise across all platforms, addressing complex issues with multilayered news stories that combine photos, graphics, video, illustration, animation, text and audio.

STYLE GUIDE

In many cases, style is amended to fit the format, and exceptions are often made for visual style over text style.

COLOR MODELS

RGB (Red/Green/Blue) is the color model for all devices generated by light sources — computers, televisions, digital cameras, mobile/tablet devices, etc. The wide range of colors are generated with varying degrees of the combinations of Red, Green and Blue. Black is generated when Red, Green and Blue have zero value; White is created when the three base colors have the maximum value.

HEX (Hexadecimal, aka Web Safe RGB) is the primary RGB naming convention used in code and the interactive color palette. The values are 0-1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-A-B-C-D-E-F. The first two digits indicate the color for Red, the second two for Green and the third two for Blue. 000000 equals black, FFFFFFFF equals white.

CMYK (Cyan/Magenta/Yellow/Black) is the color model for ink-printed products. It has fewer color options than RGB. Because newsprint is so thin, it is best to use the fewest number of inks when possible. Too much ink can cause bleeding and blurriness.

NUMBERS

NUMERICAL ALIGNMENT: Numbers in vertical columns should be aligned on the decimal. Columns where all numbers have no decimals may be center-aligned. Avoid aligning numbers flush-left.

MULTIPLE DECIMAL PLACES:

- Numbers compared with one another should have the same number of decimal places.
- Do not add additional decimal points to rounded numbers. 3 million does not necessarily equal 3.0 million, as it could be anything from 2.51 million to 3.49 million.
- Rounding to one decimal place is preferred when the data has numerous decimal places: 1.2345 → 1.2.
- Two decimal places may be used to help differentiate the numbers: 1.25 vs. 1.34.
- Three decimal places should only be used in statistics where it is the norm: i.e. a baseball batting average of .340.
- Zero has no decimal places; it should be always be listed as “0” (not “0.00”).
- Numbers that round to zero should be clarified: 0.0004 does not equal zero. It should be noted as “Less than 0.1” or <0.01, where the number of decimal places listed matches the other numbers in the visualization.
- The numeral “0” should always appear before the decimal in numbers less than zero: 0.55 (not .55)

PUNCTUATION

Special characters are used for punctuation in interactives and graphics.

Common symbols and how to type them using a Mac keyboard:

- Hyphen (“-” or minus sign)
- En-dash (option-hyphen)
- Em-dash (option-shift-hyphen)
- _ Underscore (shift-hyphen)
- Bullet (option-8)
- … Ellipsis (option-semicolon or three periods)
- * Asterisk (shift-8)

Quotation marks and apostrophes

“ Open quote (option-[)

” Close quote (option-shift-[)

’ Apostrophe facing right (option-])

‘ Apostrophe facing left (option-shift-])

Lists should be used to help readers decipher blocks of text. The punctuation that appears before list items should be a clear visual guide.

HYPHEN (-) Don't use a hyphen to begin a list. It is too small and should only be used to combine words. (Examples: small-business owner, well-known person, Italian-American).

UNDERSCORE (_), EN-DASH (–) and EM-DASH (—) Underscores are sometimes seen in AP copy when dashes should be used instead. Always replace those underscores with an en-dash. Spaces are needed both before and/or after the en-dash.

BULLETS (•) When creating lists in interactives, begin with a bullet. This is an exception to text style requiring that lists begin with dashes.

ASTERISKS Used when the explanation can be abbreviated or it applies to specific elements. The asterisk appears to the right of the noted content with no space. The explanation appears as a footnote at the bottom or in the bottom right or left of the interactive/graphic with the asterisk at the beginning, followed by a space before the content. For multiple categories, up to three asterisks may be used:

Word or phrase referenced*

* Category one

** Category two

*** Category three

Quotation marks (“ ”) and apostrophes (‘ ’)

SMART QUOTES (CURLY QUOTES) are preferred in content displayed to the viewer.

STRAIGHT QUOTES should be used to abbreviate feet (single) and inches (double): Five feet, five inches = 5'5"

STATE NAMES

- In maps, spell out if space permits. Otherwise, AP Stylebook abbreviations are preferred, or, when space is restricted in graphical content, postal abbreviations may be used.
- Use postal abbreviations for tabular content.

TEXT

Interactives and graphics are visual formats that include text to help the viewer navigate the visual story. Language should be edited down to be as short and concise as possible. Complete sentences are not always required.

HEADLINES

Headlines and subheadings are active narrative summaries that express the news to readers and consumers, published within editorial content.

- Lengthwise, they should aim to be as brief as possible.
- Avoid labels, category headers and duplicating the headline of other AP formats such as text and video.

SUBHEADS

- Subheads in the body of the graphic or interactive should be descriptions of the underlying content.
- Use Sentence case (capitalize first letter) and single quotation marks.

WIDOWS

Words that dangle after text blocks are called “widows.” Edit text or modify the spacing as needed to eliminate them.

FOOTNOTES begin with “NOTE:” (all caps followed by a colon) followed by a statement in sentence case that may be a phrase with no period or a complete sentence. Keep footnotes as short as possible.

TIME

DAYS OF THE WEEK:

- In graphics, all-caps is preferred in charts and category headers: SUN, MON, etc.
- For narrow charts, such as for mobile devices, use S, M, T, W, T, F, S (first letter, capitalized; all seven days must be listed and in sequence).

MONTHS:

- Tabular abbreviation: In graphics, all-caps is preferred in charts and category headers: JAN, FEB, etc.
- For narrow charts, such as for mobile devices, use J, F, M, A, M, J, J, A, S, O, N, D (first letter, capitalized; months must be listed in sequence, showing a minimum of six months; may continue into multiple years as long as years are also labeled)

YEARS:

- For narrow charts, such as for mobile devices: An apostrophe followed by the last two numerals: 1999 becomes '99, 2009 becomes '09. Make sure that the apostrophe is facing left, curled away from the numbers