



Our house style is a hybrid between APA-specific uses shown here and the Chicago Manual of Style, 16th edition. Everyone at APA has access to the online version of this book.

Our official dictionary is Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th edition. Almost all spelling questions can be resolved by looking up the words there. If two acceptable spellings are given for a particular word, use the first one.

Keep the following list handy for words and usages that come up often or that are specific to APA.

Animals and Species

Check Webster's for acceptable spellings, whether or not to capitalize certain words, etc.

Use a hyphen? One word or two?

email

e-book

e-learning

land use; land-use plan

price-managed lanes

ride-sharing

bike share; bike-sharing program

home sharing

car sharing, but car-sharing service

child care

day care; day care center

health care; health care facility

citywide (for other -wide words, use hyphen if they are not in Webster's_

coauthor

coeditor

cochair

colocate, colocation

crowdsourcing

African American

build-out (noun)

datasets

downzone; downzoning

upzone; upzoning

eco-density

eco-roof

ecotourism

eco-village

farmers market

fifty-fifty

high rise, but high-rise building

home builder

home owner; home owners association

home buyer

home sharing, but home-sharing website

light-rail station

placemaking
policy making; policy-making body
ride sharing; ride-sharing service
sea level; sea-level rise

Titles of people

Use gender-neutral name when possible: commissioner, board member, council member (not councilman or councilwoman)

Cap a title before someone's name, but not if it follows the name.

Director of Planning Jane Jacobs . . .

Jane Jacobs, director of planning

APA-specific guidelines

Honorifics and Credentials (AICP, etc.)

There is a separate list of acceptable honorifics and credentials and how to use them in this folder: X:\Common\Brand_Identity\APA House Style Guide. In *print* (including in correspondence, etc.), our practice is to use small caps for these letters, like this: Jane Jacobs, AICP.

APA Board and AICP Board titles:

Check the APA website for exact titles and names of current board members.

Don't use periods for degrees like BA, MA, PhD, JD

It's acceptable to use NPC as an abbreviation for APA's National Planning Conference. Be sure to spell it out on first mention if there would be any doubt as to what NPC means.

National Community Planning Month (don't use NCPM)

Great Places in America (don't use GPiA).

Great Places in America is the flagship program of National Community Planning Month. (use "flagship" to refer to this program)

Planning-related

Congress for the New Urbanism, but new urbanism

smart growth (general term); Smart Growth (specific program) SmartCode (specific type of code; not a generic term)

complete streets

Government organizations, bodies, and programs

Don't capitalize city, county, state in sentences like this:

The city will implement the plan next year. (NOT: The City will implement the plan next year)

Congress, but congressional

Obama administration

U.S. Census, but the census, the 2010 census, census figures

block grants

Court: capped in second reference to the U.S. Supreme Court only. Use lower-case court for second reference to state or other court.

Technology

cell phone but smartphone

.jpg

PDF

email

e-book

internet

wifi

Lidar

URLs: planning.org (no http://www. needed). Test the stripped-down URL to make sure it works.

In periodicals: OK to shorten lengthy URLs using tinyurl.com. Generally shorten anything over 50 characters.

No need to say “last visited on . . . ” in reference lists

GIS (no periods needed)

3-D

Geography

Spell out state names in text like this:

Dayton, Ohio, is drafting a new plan. (NOT Dayton, OH is drafting a new plan or Dayton OH is drafting a new plan)

(Note the commas before and after Ohio. We use the full state name EXCEPT on forms, in addresses, on envelopes, or in tables where space is tight)

Some cities do not need the state name in text because there would be little confusion as to what we’re talking about. They are:

Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Honolulu, Houston, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, Miami, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, New Orleans, New York, Oklahoma City, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Salt Lake City, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle

Government buildings: Capitol Hill, city hall

Don’t capitalize city, county, state in sentences like this:

The city will implement the plan next year. (NOT The City will implement the plan next year)

The city of Chicago will implement the plan.

The state of Washington will implement the plan.

Washington State is in the Pacific Northwest.

Numbers

Spell out one through nine in text. Use numerals from 10 up. It's fine to use all numerals in tables.

Titles of works, plans, etc.

Books: italicize title

Newspapers: Italicize titles. For the *New York Times*, don't capitalize or italicize the "the." *New York Times*

Magazines and journals: Italicize titles. *Journal of the American Planning Association*.

Blog titles: Italicize. But put titles of individual posts in quotes.

Article titles: place in quotations. "Hurricane Sandy's Wake-Up Call" is in the February issue of *Planning*.

Italicize plan names. *Gulfport 2020. Borough Pedestrian Action Plans. Milwaukee Avenue Corridor Plan*. If you use an acronym to refer to the plan after first reference, italicize the acronym, too.

Specific words

A historic, not an historic

Data uses a singular verb. The data shows that sea levels will continue to rise.

We hyphenate land use as an adjective (The land-use plan is under consideration) but not mixed use (The developer has proposed a mixed use complex).

African American (no hyphen); white, black

LGBTQ

Generations: baby boomers, millennials, Gen X, Gen Y

graywater

Headlines and titles—what to capitalize

DO NOT capitalize: a, an, and, as, at, by, etc., for, from, if, in of, on, or, the, to, versus

CAPITALIZE: After, All, Also, Among, Any, Are, Be Beneath, Between, But, Can, Down, During, Go, Into, Is, It, May, Mid, No, Not, Only, Our, Out, Over, Per, So, Some, Than, That, Then, These, They, Through, Toward, Under, Up, Via, Was, We, What, When, Where, Which, Who, Why, Will, With, Without