

## **The Skidmore College Guide to Writing Right** (short version)

Updated May 5, 2025

To maintain consistency in Skidmore College publications, the Office of Communications and Marketing uses modified AP style guidelines for all digital and print content. (A longer, more detailed version of this guide is available upon request.)

**Numbers:** One through nine are usually spelled out, while 10 and above are generally written as numerals. (Also, first, second, and 10th.) Millions, billions, and trillions generally use a figure-word combination (2.5 million).

**Percentages, ages, and measurements** use numerals. Write 2% (**not** 2 percent).

**Dollar amounts:** \$5 (not \$5.00).

**Dates:** When referring to a specific (numbered) date, write out March, April, May, June, and July, and abbreviate Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., and Dec. Do not include “th” or “st” after the numeral. (March 5 and Sept. 6; classes start in September.)

**Seasons** are lowercase (spring semester).

**Times:** 10 a.m. (not 10:00 a.m.), but noon or midnight (not 12 p.m.)

**Names and titles:** Official job titles are capitalized when they appear before a person’s name but lowercase elsewhere (e.g., I wrote to President Conner, who is president and professor of English). Do not abbreviate professor. If used as a title, include the individual’s full academic rank (associate professor, etc.). Endowed chairs and similar named positions are always capitalized regardless of placement (Carey Anne Zucca is Collyer Vice President for Advancement.). Use Dr. titles and degrees sparingly.

**A major** is capitalized only when it is a proper noun (chemistry, Japanese).

**University degrees:** an associate degree. a bachelor’s (degree). a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science. a master’s (degree). Abbreviate: B.A., B.S., J.D., LL.D. M.A., MBA, M.S., Ph.D.

**Academic departments and programs:** Capitalize the official name but lowercase casual references. (The Skidmore College Department of History; She taught in a college history department.)

**Book, films, exhibition, and other titles** are usually placed in quotation marks (not italics). Do not use quotation marks with names of journals, newspapers, magazines, reference books, or holy books. (See exceptions in print materials below.)

**Course titles** are capitalized without quotes. Generic course names are lowercase. (He teaches American history. His course is Introduction to American History, History 240.)

**Phone numbers** use hyphens. Include the area code. Abbreviate extension as ext. 518-580-5000 ext. 5341

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**Punctuation:** Do not insert an extra space after a period. Contrary to AP, the College uses the serial (Oxford) comma. Capitalize the first word following a colon only if it starts a complete sentence. Dashes — often used to show a break in thought — are preceded and followed by a single space. Put the period after the closing parenthesis when the parentheses are part of another sentence (as in this example). (A complete, independent sentence within parentheses, like this one, should have the period placed before the closing parenthesis.)

**References to students, alumni, and parents:** References to students and alumni should be followed by an apostrophe and the two-digit year of graduation (Tory Abbott '23). References to parents include P (Jon Smith P'99).

**Addresses and state names:** Write out the full names of states in most usages. Do not use postal abbreviations for states unless the state is part of a full address. When a city is used with a state, both the city and state should be followed by commas (such as in this example of Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, in the central part of the state).

**Campus buildings:** All references *must* include the honoree's name, which is never abbreviated.

**the College** is capitalized when referring to Skidmore College.

Advisor (not adviser)

Alum, alumni, graduate(s) (acceptable when gender is not specified)

*Creative Futures*: The Skidmore College Strategic Plan, 2025-2030

Creative Thought Matters (capitalized only as a complete phrase.)

email. internet. web. website. webpage. healthcare (one word).

McCaffery-Wagman Tennis and Wellness Center

Avoid using Saratoga for Saratoga Springs.

Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery. the Tang (second reference).

Billie Tisch Center for Integrated Sciences. Do not abbreviate as CIS.

### Exceptions in print materials

The following exceptions *may* be made — especially in print material, such as posters and programs — but must be applied consistently throughout a publication. Otherwise, all rules of AP style hold.

- The names of months may be written out in full form (rather than abbreviated). For instance, October 23, 2024, rather than Oct. 23.
- Times may be written as 1:00 p.m. (rather than 1 p.m.) particularly in programs that also include times that do not fall on the full hour (Dinner at 7:00 p.m.; lecture at 8:30 p.m.)
- Book titles and other works may be italicized according to prevalent usage/rules of the Chicago Manual of Style. For instance, Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* rather than Mark Twain's "Adventures of Huckleberry Finn." Other citations also should follow the Chicago Manual of Style.
- For programs, posters, and similar publications, where grammatical rules are customarily suspended, job titles and similar may be capitalized even when they follow an individual's name. For instance, "A speech by Philip A. Glotzbach, President Emeritus of Skidmore College."

Please contact the managing editor in the Office of Communications and Marketing with questions about this guide.