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Writing in Style

This Sage-specific style guide is intended to ensure consistency and clarity among web pages, publications, correspondence and data at Russell Sage College.

For items not addressed in this guide, the Office of Communication defers to the most recent version of the *Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual*. For matters of style that are particularly unique, troublesome or create much debate, aim for consistency within the publication in question.

Academic degrees

- Spell out. *Ex: associate degree; bachelor's degree; master's degree; doctorate or doctoral degree.*

- **Please Note:** *associate degree* (no possessive).

- Abbreviate specific degrees with periods and without spaces between the letters and periods. *Ex: B.A.; M.S.; Ph.D.; J.D.; M.D.*

- **Please Note:** Per *AP Style Guide* and Russell Sage College style, the following degrees have no periods: MBA, OTD, MSOT, DPT

- Set off an abbreviated degree with commas after a full name. *Ex: Jane Smith, Ph.D., spoke.*

- *Jane Smith, Ph.D.,* or *Jane Smith, M.D.,* is preferred over *Dr. Jane Smith.*

Addresses

- Use the abbreviations Ave., Blvd. and St. only with a numbered address. *Ex: 1600 Broad St.* Spell out and capitalize a formal street name without a number. *Ex: His office is on Main Street.*

- Use lowercase and spell out when used alone or with more than one street name. *Ex: She stood at the corner of Congress and First streets.*

Admission

- Always used in singular form at Sage. *Ex: Office of Admission, admission publications.*

Ages

- Always use numerical figures.

Alumnae/i

- Use *alumna* when referring to one female graduate, and *alumnus* for one male graduate.
- Use the plural forms: *alumni* when referring to male graduates; *alumnae* (pron. a-lum-nee) when referring to female graduates; and *alumnae/i* when referring to male and female graduates.
- Do not use “alum” or “alums.”

Ampersand/and

- Use the ampersand (&) for “and” only as part of an official corporate name. *Ex: Barnes & Noble.*

Annual

- An event cannot be annual until it has been held in at least two successive years. Do not use the term “first annual.”

Apostrophe

- Do not use an apostrophe when referring to a decade as a single period of time. Do use an apostrophe if the decade is abbreviated. *Ex: She danced in the 1920s. Ellen attended college in the '50s.*

Buildings

Use the following when referring to buildings on the Sage campuses:

Albany campus

Administration Building
Albany campus library or Albany Learning Center
Armory at Sage
Art + Design Building
Esteves Science Hall
Froman Hall
Health Sciences Building
Opalka Gallery
Rathbone Hall
Residence Hall
South Hall
West Hall
William F. and Mary C. Kahl Campus Center or Kahl Campus Center
(KCC acceptable on second reference. Areas within KCC include the
Gymnasium, Room 224 and Room 105)

Troy campus:

Ackerman Hall
Admission House (or Admission)
Anna M. Plum Memorial Building (or Plum Building)
Buchman Pavilion
Bush Memorial Center
Alan Goldberg Auditorium (or Goldberg Auditorium) in Bush Memorial Center
Cowee Hall

Frear House
French House

French House Annex
Fredericka Voorhaar Slingerland Alumnae House (or Alumnae House)
Gale House (or McMurray/Spicer/Gale when talking about campus residential houses)
German House
Gurley Hall
Hart Hall
James L. Meader Little Theater (or Meader Little Theater. Little Theater acceptable on second reference)
Jane Haight Wells Spirituality Center
John Paine Building
Julia Howard Bush Memorial Center (or Bush Memorial Center)
Kellas Hall and Slocum Hall (or Kellas/Slocum when talking about campus residences)
Lorraine Walker Center
Lorraine Walker Education Building
Manning Hall
McCrea House
McKinstry Hall/McKinstry Dining Hall
McKinstry Student Center
McMurray House (or McMurray/Spicer/Gale is when talking about campus residences)
Meyer Gym
m.o.s.s. books and other provisions
Mueller Science Hall
Robison Athletic and Recreation Center
the Aggie Multipurpose Room
Robison Common
Roy Court
Sage Hall
Schacht Fine Arts Center
Scrimshaw Health Sciences Hall
Shea Learning Center
Smyth Terrace of Buchman Pavilion
Spanish House
Slocum Hall (see Kellas Hall)
Spicer House (or McMurray/Spicer/Gale when talking about campus residences)
Vail House
Vanderheyden Hall

Please Note: If a building is preceded by “the,” it should be lowercase: *Ex: The workshop will be held in the Aggie Multipurpose Room in the Robison Athletic and Recreation Center.*

Please Note: The *AP Style Guide* indicates “Use figures and capitalize ‘Room’ when used with a figure: Room 2, Room 211.”: *Ex: The panel discussion will be in Kahl Campus Center, Room 224.*

Campus

- *Troy campus* and *Albany campus*; campus should not be capitalized.

Capitalization

- Use uppercase for the proper names of Sage offices and academic divisions, departments or programs, but lowercase for the common title. *Ex: Russell Sage College Office of Admission; admission office.*
- Capitalize (as proper names) specific features of the curriculum and student affairs *Ex: Founder's Day Convocation, Rally Day, Portfolio Day, etc.*
- Use lowercase for seasons of the year. *Ex: summer session, fall semester, winter weather, spring break*
- Use lowercase for first-year students (preferred over “freshmen”), sophomores, juniors or seniors when referring to individuals, but capitalize names of organized entities. *Ex: Class of 2020*
- Capitalize specific majors and degrees, but lowercase general fields of study. *Ex: Kaitlin is a Graphic + Media Design major who wants to run her own ad agency. She said being able to take business classes as well as design classes will help her meet her goal.*
- Capitalize *Russell Sage College Board of Trustees*, but lowercase all other references to the board. *Ex: The Russell Sage College Board of Trustees met last week. The board of trustees approved the strategic plan. She is a trustee of the college.*
- Capitalize specific course titles only; do not use quotation marks. *Ex: Contemporary History of Russia; a course in biology.*
- Use uppercase for a person's specific, official title, only if it precedes their name. Do not capitalize titles that follow a name. *Ex: The seminar was led by Professor of Biology Judy Smith. Ph.D. John Smith, vice president of academic affairs, attended the seminar.*
- Always capitalize languages. *Ex: I am taking a course in English. He is a professor of Spanish.*
- Capitalize official program names on campus, such as the *Higher Education Opportunity Program* (HEOP is acceptable on second reference).
- Capitalize names of races and nationalities, such as *Spanish, Caucasian, Irish, etc.*
- Capitalize only the first word of a phrase in tabular listings of events, unless using a proper noun or an official title. *Ex: 8:30 a.m. – Registration and welcoming remarks
9:30 a.m. – Campus tour*
- Capitalize regions of the country, but do not capitalize compass directions. *Ex: We live in the Northeast. Saratoga is north of Albany.*
- Use lowercase for government, city, county, state, and federal unless part of a proper title. *Ex: We live in New York state. We work in the City of Troy. We partner with the city schools of Troy.*
- Articles, coordinate conjunctions and prepositions (a, and, at, the, on, in, to, under, between, etc.) should not be capitalized in headings (headlines, titles) unless they appear as the first word.

- Capitalize the word reunion when it is used to refer to the annual Russell Sage Reunion. Do not capitalize it when it is used in a common reference. *Ex: Fifty alumnae from the Class of 1966 attended Reunion this year. Several alumnae talked about their reunion with other classmates last month.*

Chair

- Use *chair* rather than *chairman*, *chairwoman* or *chairperson*. Do not capitalize in text, only as part of the signature of a letter or other formal document.

Class years

- When identifying current students or alumnae by their class years, use the following guidelines:

Kasey Hibbert '91 shared career advice with students.

Kasey Hibbert is a member of the Russell Sage College Class of 1991.

Kasey Hibbert is a 1991 graduate of Russell Sage College.

For clarity, you may want to use the whole year when referring to class years from past centuries. *Ex: Kianna Cameron '22 received a scholarship established in memory of Lillian Meadows, 1919.*

Commas

- If an individual's age is used, set it off by commas. *Ex: After graduating from Sage, Simon Fletcher, 25, quickly rose through the leadership ranks at Banks Technology Solutions and is now CEO.*

- Use a comma to separate parts of a compound sentence, placing the comma before the conjunction. Do not use a comma with an essential, or restrictive, clause (usually introduced by *that*). Use a comma to set off a nonessential, or nonrestrictive, clause (introduced by *which*).

- Note: Unlike in *AP Style*, Russell Sage College uses the serial comma in simple sentences (placing a comma in a series of three or more items.)

Ex: Correct in Russell Sage College communications: Beth writes short stories, graphic novels, and podcast scripts.

Incorrect: John did internships in advertising, finance and public relations.

- Do not set off the titles Jr., Sr., II, III, with commas. *Ex: John Smith Jr. will visit campus next week.*

Composition titles

- Place in italics the names of books, newspapers, journals, films, full-length plays, symphonies, operas, ships and airplanes.

- Use quotation marks around articles, poems, songs, one-act plays and television programs.

Computer Terms

- database

- download
- email
- homepage
- website
- internet
- online (no dash) or off-line (with dash)
- World Wide Web or web

Dates

- Always use figures, without st, nd, rd or th.

Ex: Correct: Graduate Open House, Thursday, March 19

Incorrect: Graduate Open House, Thursday, March 19th

- When writing a date, place a comma between the day, date and year, and after the year. *Ex: The new academic year officially begins on Thursday, August 27, 2020, with opening convocation.*
- No comma is needed between the month and year when the day is not mentioned. *Ex: Russell Sage College's 100th commencement was held in May 2017.*

Decades

- Do not use an apostrophe to form the plural when referring to a decade as a single period of time. *Ex: Jane attended college in the 1920s. Jane attended college in the '20s.*

Emeritae/i

- Use *emerita* when referring to one female retired professor or trustee, and *emeritus* for one male retired professor or trustee.
- Use the plural forms: *emeriti* when referring to males; *emeritae* (pron. e-meri-tee) when referring to females; and *emeritae/i* when referring to males and females.

Esteves School of Education

- Use the Esteves School of Education's full name on first reference when referring to programs or events within the School of Education. *Ex: Russell Sage College's Esteves School of Education will host an education night to discuss opportunities for those interested in pursuing a career in education.*

Freshman/First-year

- First-year student(s) is preferred over "freshman" or "freshmen"

Gender-Neutral and Inclusive Language

- Avoid gender-specific words and phrases when possible. *Ex. Use police officer over policeman, chair or chairperson over chairwoman and first-year student over freshman.*
- Be sensitive to the fact that individuals have a preference for the pronouns used to refer to them. Always use an individual's preferred pronoun.

Hyphens

- Hyphenate adjectival phrases (an adjective and a noun) when they precede the noun modified.
Ex: She has a 4-year-old son. John is 7 years old. The letter came via first-class mail. She lived in on-campus housing. The two rented an apartment off campus.
- Hyphenate part time and full time only when used as adjectives. *Ex: Bo has a full-time position. Eiley works full time.*
- Do not hyphenate vice president (or any other compound titles) in any reference. *Ex: She is the vice president of the organization.*

Lists

- When noting an indented list of items, do not punctuate the end of each line item nor the last item. *Ex: Russell Sage Colleges offers several admission options:*
 - full-time study*
 - part-time study*
 - evening study*
 - graduate study*

Middle initials

- When using a middle initial, always follow the letter with a period. *Ex: John W. Smith.*

Money

- Do not use decimal points when referring to round figures. *Ex: \$6, not \$6.00.*
- Use figures for one million or more, but spell out the word. *Ex: This is a \$15 million capital campaign.*

Names

- On first reference, refer to individuals using their full names. Thereafter, use only the first name for students and alumnae/i on social media and web content. Use title and last name for faculty, administrators and distinguished guests.
 - An exception to this rule is press releases, which should adhere to the *AP Style Guide's* guidance and use only last names on second reference.

Ex: Professor of Biology Luis Thorpe gave the keynote speech. Professor Thorpe is a leader in virus research.

Ex: When she decided to change majors, Ariannah Logan '19 was worried it was going to be a big ordeal. Instead, Ariannah says, everyone at Sage couldn't have been more helpful.

Ex: "We're proud to have provided generations of students with a home away from home during their college years," said Troy Mayor Patrick Madden. Mayor Madden made his remarks at an event celebrating Sage's partnerships with the City of Troy.

Numbers/numerals

- Spell out from one to nine; use numerals for 10 and above. *Ex: She owns two dogs and 10 cats.*
- Use numerals even for numbers below 10, when indicating: age, course credit hours, statistics, ratios, percentages and amounts of money.
- Spell out a number at the beginning of a sentence, unless that number indicates a calendar year (but avoid if possible). *Ex: The year 1976 was a very good one. 1976 was a good year.*
- Use a comma after digits signifying thousands except when referring to temperature, year or SAT scores. *Ex: We served more than 4,000 students.*
- Use figures for one million or more, but spell out the word. *Ex: This is a \$15 million capital campaign.*

Percent

- Use the % sign, with no space, and always use numerals. *Ex: She won 56.2% of the vote.*

Preferred spellings and terms

- advisor, not adviser
- alumna or alumnus, alumnae or alumni, not alum, alums
- catalog, not catalogue
- canceled
- coeducational, not co-educational
- ensure, not insure (except for insurance)
- health care (two words)

Professor

- Never abbreviate.

Pronouns

- Always use individuals' preferred pronouns.

Quotation marks

- The period and the comma always go within the quotation marks.
- The dash, semicolon and colon, question mark and exclamation point go within the quotation marks when they apply to the quoted matter only. They go outside when they apply to the whole sentence. *Ex: Did you watch "The Story of English"? Then he asked, "Did you check for iron in the sample?"*

Russell Sage College

- On first reference, use the full name Russell Sage College. Sage is acceptable on second reference in all documents. The abbreviation "RSC" is acceptable on second reference for informal communications.

Sage Graduate School

- Sage Graduate School was a division of Sage when it was known as The Sage Colleges. Please avoid using Sage Graduate School and instead refer to graduate programs. *Ex. Browse our comprehensive list of competitive and innovative graduate programs, offered across our two campuses.*

Spacing

- Do not use double spaces between sentences or after colons. Single space only between sentences.

States

- Use *New York state* when necessary to distinguish the state from New York City. Use *state of Washington* or *Washington state* to distinguish from Washington, D.C. (lowercase “state”)

- The names of the 50 U.S. states should be spelled out when used in the body of a story, whether standing alone or in conjunction with a city, town, village or military base.

- Within text, place one comma between the city and the state name. *Ex: He was traveling to Austin, Texas.*

- The following U.S. cities can stand alone in text (no state needed):

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

- Communications for alumni and internal audiences do not need to use states with the cities of Troy and Albany. *Ex: Chloe-Ann Graham '89 owns a business in Albany.*

Telephone numbers

- Use dashes. Do not use “1” before toll-free numbers. *Ex: 518-244-2000 or 800-123-4567.*

- Extension numbers, if used, are preceded by *Ext.*

That/which/who

- *That* is preferred to introduce clauses that refer to inanimate objects. *Which* is the only acceptable pronoun to introduce a nonessential, or nonrestrictive, clause (one that is not essential to the meaning of the sentence) that refers to an inanimate object or an animal without a name. *Who* introduces clauses that refer to human beings.

Ex: Correct in Russell Sage College communications: Read about members of the senior class who received job offers before graduation.

Incorrect: Read about members of the senior class that received job offers before graduation.

Theater/re

- Refer to *theatre* program or the *theatre* profession. Refer to physical facilities as a *theater*. *Ex: the James L. Meader Little Theater.*

Thrive@ Russell Sage

Time

- Morning and afternoon designations are in lowercase letters with periods, with no spaces between them. *Ex: 8 a.m., 2 p.m.*

- Use 7 p.m., not 7:00 p.m., for the hour; 7:15 p.m. for time not on the hour.

- Do not use 12 p.m. or 12 a.m.; use noon and midnight.

Ex: Correct in Russell Sage College communications: The seminar begins at noon. The lecture begins at 7, followed by a reception at 8:15.

Incorrect: The seminar begins at 12 noon. The awards ceremony begins at 7:00. Lunch will be served at 12 p.m.

Titles (see also *Composition titles*)

- Use uppercase for a person's specific, official title only if it precedes their name. Do not capitalize titles that follow a name. *Ex: The seminar was led by Professor of Biology Judy Smith. Ph.D. John Smith, vice president of academic affairs, attended the seminar.*

- Do not capitalize unofficial titles preceding a name. *Ex: The exhibit featured artist Elise Dunn.*

United States/U.S.

- Spell out when used as a noun; abbreviate when used as an adjective. *Ex: They spent years adjusting to the United States. U.S. policy in Europe was the topic of discussion.*

Upstate

- Always lowercase: upstate New York, per the *AP Style Guide*.

Women's Institute at Russell Sage College

- On first reference, use the full name of The Women's Institute at Russell Sage College. Women's Institute is acceptable on second reference.

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