

Grammar & Editorial Guide

The grammar and editorial guide will help you communicate in a clear and consistent way when writing for the campus audience or LBCC community.

We generally follow the **Associated Press (AP) Stylebook**. This LBCC Writing Style Guide includes some exceptions to the AP Stylebook and adopts some guidelines from the **Chicago Manual of Style**, extra important topics, areas where there are frequent errors, and LBCC specific guidelines.

Because the majority of writing for LBCC is digital, this Style Guide puts emphasis on writing for the Internet, drawing from two sources with similar content: **The Microsoft Manual of Style (Edition 4)**, and **The Yahoo! Style Guide (2010)**.

The above reference books are available to primary LBCC writers in either book or digital format along with the full Style Guide, and a small, condensed version of the Style Guide is available for broader distribution.

For questions about punctuation and spelling, you can also refer to various online dictionaries such as Merriam-Webster or Dictionary.com.

Academic and Non-Academic Organization

Schools at Long Beach City College are divided into five different schools which should be written as follows:

1. School of Career and Technical Education
2. School of Health, Science, and Mathematics
3. School of Kinesiology and Athletics
4. School of Language Arts and Communication
5. School of Social Sciences and the Arts

Departments exist within each school and are written both formally and informally. The formal name is capitalized, while the informal name is not capitalized unless it is a proper noun.

- The Performing Arts Department is showcasing a new play this month.
- Fred is studying performing arts next semester.

Programs exist within each department and encompass specific subject matter that leads to a certificate or degree.

- The Geology program in the Physical Sciences department offers an AS degree.

Courses of Study or Classes represent the subject matter taught in a specific program. Always capitalize the course of study followed by its acronym. When listing the course name, use standard rules of capitalization followed by the class number.

- Cisco is currently enrolled in Elementary Astronomy (ASTR 1).

Non-Academic Organizations at Long Beach City College are the offices and departments that serve a critical function, but are not directly associated with a program that leads to a degree. Offices and departments such as Counseling, Human Resources, and Information Technology Services are considered non-academic areas.

Academic Degrees

1. If mention of degrees is necessary to establish someone's credentials, the preferred form is to avoid an abbreviation and use instead a phrase.

- John Jones, who has a doctorate in psychology, is today's speaker.

2. When listing degree options, use the following abbreviated formats when necessary.

- AA – Associate of Arts
- AA-T – Associate in Arts for Transfer
- AS – Associate in Science for Transfer
- AS-T – Associate in Science for Transfer
- Cert. – Certificates

3. Spell out a degree on first formal use, and then use the abbreviation with periods.

- Associate of Arts, AA degree
- Associate in Science, AS degree

- John Jones, who has an Associate of Science degree, joined the Parsons Corporation.
4. Use an apostrophe in bachelor's degree, a master's etc., but there is no possessive in Bachelor of Arts or Master of Science.
- Mary Smith, who has a Bachelor of Arts degree from California State University – Long Beach, earned her master's degree from USC.
5. There is no possessive in associate degree. Also, use lower case when not referring to a specific area of study.
- She earned her associate degree from Long Beach City College.
6. Use such abbreviations as BA, MA, LL.D and PhD only when the need to identify many individuals by degree and first reference would make the preferred form cumbersome. Use these abbreviations only after a full name – never after just a last name. When used after a name, an academic abbreviation is set off by commas.
- John Snow, PhD; Sam Smith, MA; Betty Jones, PhD and Mary King, PhD, were speakers at the event. Smith's specialty is early childhood development.

** Note: Use periods or not, but be consistent with your choice.*

7. 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.
- John Smith, PhD, or Dr. John Smith – not Dr. John Smith, PhD

Academic Titles

1. Academic titles and ranks that precede a name should be capitalized. If the title appears before a name, no comma is needed.
- Professor of Mathematics, Jane Smith; Instructor Jane Smith.
2. If the title follows the name, do not capitalize it. This applies to all formal titles such as president, chancellor, chairman, etc.

- Jane Smith, professor of sociology, will be speaking at today's lecture.
- John Doe, dean of the college, will attend tonight's board meeting.

3. When a person's title is mentioned on first reference, they can be referred to by their last name.

- Professor Charles Xavier is the premiere geneticist on campus. Xavier plans on teaching two additional classes next semester.

Acronyms

In general, avoid using acronyms for identity. Some readers (especially those outside or new to the LBCC family) find unfamiliar acronyms confusing. So when writing for the community use acronyms sparingly don't make "alphabet soup." Acronyms should be included in the first reference to an organization or program. The program may be referred to by its acronym on subsequent references. No periods are used with acronyms.

- The School of Career Technology Educational (CTE) prepares students for a wide variety of vocational choices that can lead students into a fruitful career.

Addresses

Always use abbreviations for directional cues and designations such as *Ave.*, *Blvd.*, and *St.* for numbered addresses. All other words such as alley, drive, road, room, suite, or way should be written out fully. Use periods to abbreviate post office boxes.

- 4901 E. Carson St., Long Beach, CA 90808
- Long Beach City College is located on Carson Street.
- P.O. Box 200

Ages

Always use figures when referring to ages. Ages expressed as adjectives before a noun or as substitutes for a noun should be hyphenated. When using decades to refer to age, do not use an apostrophe.

- The student is 24 years old.
- The election is for 18-year-olds only.
- She is an older woman in her 70s.

Ampersands

Use an ampersand when it is part of a formal name or title. It should not be used in place of the word “and,” except for specific abbreviations. Exceptions are only allowed for creative use in graphic design as needed.

Building, Room, and Space Names

1. Buildings at the Long Beach City College, Liberal Arts Campus are designated with one capital letter.

- Building T

2. Buildings at the Long Beach City College, Pacific Coast Campus are designated with two capital letters.

- Building MM

3. When referring to any LBCC campus location, you should always start with the building, followed by the room number. In the long version, a comma separates the building and the room number. In the short version, a dash (-) separates the building and the room number, with no spaces on either side of the dash. Building and Room are always capitalized as part of a proper name.

- Long Version: Building T, Room 100 or Building MM, Room 1400
- Short Version: T-1200 or MM-1400

4. The long or short version can be used at the writer’s discretion.

5. Approved names of all campus locations can be found here.

Campuses

Long Beach City College has two campus locations:

- Long Beach City College, Liberal Arts Campus (formal); LBCC-LAC (informal)
- Long Beach City College, Pacific Coast Campus (formal), LBCC-PCC (informal)

Class Year

1. When referring to the academic year of a student, use first-year student rather than freshman. Terms denoting a student's status are lowercase.

- The application deadline for first-year students is Tuesday, May 23; the deadline for second-year students is Wednesday, May 24.

2. Use *future students* rather than *prospective students* when referring to new students who are not yet enrolled.

- Future students can set an appointment with a counselor during the first week of the new semester.

College Name & District Affiliation

1. Use Long Beach City College on first reference and on all covers of print publications. The abbreviated form of LBCC can be used on all subsequent references.

- Long Beach City College is located in Long Beach, CA. Students from Avalon, Lakewood, Long Beach, and Signal Hill attend LBCC.

2. Long Beach City College refers to the two Long Beach campuses, and Long Beach City College District refers to the service area as designated by the California Community Colleges System. The District includes the cities of Avalon, Lakewood, Long Beach and Signal Hill.

Contractions

The use of contractions is directly related to voice and tone and is acceptable to use in informal writing such as the website and other marketing materials. When using contractions, be mindful of audiences with a significant international makeup. Heavy use of contractions can be difficult to understand for non-native English speakers and should be used sparingly.

Dates

1. Dates are to be listed in the following format: *day of the week, date (month, day)*.

- Thursday, September 14

2. When listing calendar events, use the following format: *time, day, date*.

- 9 am, Tuesday, May 23

3. When listing the date, do not use the abbreviations *st, nd, rd, or th* after the day.

- December 7

4. When typing just the day, use the complete name of the day (i.e. Monday). Capitalize and do not abbreviate, except when needed in a tabular format – three letters without punctuation:

- Sun, Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

5. Use abbreviations for days when you are displaying business hours for a location.

- M, T, W, Th, F, Sa, Su

6. Commas are unnecessary when only the month and year are given.

- He received his diploma in June 2012 and transferred on August 28.

7. It's *Daylight Saving Time* not *Daylight Savings Time*.
8. When referring to an event that has occurred the day before, do not use the word *yesterday*. Always use the day of the week.

Internet Terminology and Usage

1. Do not include the `http://` protocol when listing a URL.
2. Avoid using the full URL or email address in website text. It is better to make your URLs descriptive and link to the website.

Example (Correct):

More information can be found at the Office of Communications & Community Engagement.

Example (Incorrect):

For more information, click here.

LBCC-specific Terminology

People

- Future students (not *prospective*)

Groups

- Board of Trustees
- Long Beach City College Foundation (formal); LBCC Foundation (informal)
- President's Ambassadors
- Citizens Oversight Committee

LBCC Sports Teams and Conferences

1. LBCC teams are members of the California community College Athletic Association (CCCAA).
2. Use an apostrophe when referring to the Vikings as a possessive. When referring to a specific type of team, use a plural possessive.

1. The Vikings' women's volleyball team won the game.

Numerals

1. Spell out all numbers beginning a sentence, except for those beginning with a year.
 - Two hundred students attended the ceremony.
 - 1942 was an important year during World War II.
2. Spell out whole numbers under 10. For figures above 10, use the numeral.
 - Bruce has three tassels for graduation gown.
 - There were 42 students at the ceremony.
3. Ordinal numbers should be spelled out.
 - First, second, third...
4. Use figures for addresses and course numbers.
 - Elementary Chinese 1, Food Handler Certification 353
 - 239 Los Cerritos Center
5. Use a comma for numbers using four digits or more.
 - 2,500
6. Larger numbers over 7 figures such as millions, billions, and trillions should be written with a numeral and the word. Use decimals when applicable.
 - 250 million people
 - \$7.5 billion

7. Percentages are written with the numeral and the word. If the sentence starts with a percentage, the numeral should be spelled out.

- First-year students account for 30 percent of the student body.
- Ninety-five percent of Star Wars fans dislike the prequel movies.

Semesters

1. Use capitalization when referring to a specific semester.

- Spring Semester 2018
- Professor Moriarty will teaching this fall.

Time

1. The *time period* is written with lowercase letters with or without periods. Add “00” for times on the hour. If the time period is written with capital letters, do not use periods.

- 9:00 a.m. or 9:00 am
- 9:00 AM not 9:00 A.M.

2. Use the terms noon or midnight when referring to the 12-hour cycle, respectively.

Units, Credit and Grades

1. Use numerals when referring to the number of units for a course.

- The course is 3 units.

2. Use a hyphen between the numeral and the unit when using it as an adjective.

- Students must take at least one 3-unit course.

3. The word *credit* can be used as a general term for an unspecified number of units.

- Students will receive credit for taking this course.

4. Grade names should be capitalized when using them as proper nouns.

- B grade, grade of B, a grade of Incomplete

5. Do not capitalize grade names when using them as adjectives.

- Professor Snape marked his math assignment incomplete.