

The Knight News Style Sheet

Every publication has its own style sheet, articulating its choices about style, grammar, and mechanics—because all those can be subjective. Writers and editors should use The Knight News Style Sheet every time they write and edit. They should get to know it well. The Style Sheet doesn't address every question that might arise. If you don't find what you need here, try the [Purdue Online Writing Lab](#) (an excellent resource). When in doubt, talk to your editor. Talk to other writers. Talk to your faculty advisor.

I. TITLES

A. Use “Dr.” only for MDs and PhDs

B. Academic departments – uppercase (e.g. Mathematics Department, Biology Department, English Department)

C. “Queens College” on first reference and then “QC”

D. “Spokesperson” and “Councilmember” - keep it gender neutral

E. “Alumni” is for plural male and female; **“alumnae”** for plural female

F. First and last name on first reference and then use only the last name.

G. Legislative titles: written out on first reference, abbreviated thereafter (Sen., Rep., etc.)

H. The name in an attribution should go **BEFORE** the word “said.”

1. Ex: “...Tom said” NOT “..said Tom.”

I. Spell out the word by first reference, with the acronym in parenthesis, then use the acronyms

1. Ex: “John F. Kennedy Airport (JFK)...” Again, spell out on first reference and then just use acronym after that

J. Academic majors - Capitalized

1. Ex: History major, English major

II. DO's AND DON'Ts

1. When quoting students, write their class standing and majors.

2. No italicizing for emphasis in the paper. Book titles are italicized

3. **Dashes** – appear when interrupting the flow of a sentence. Always use long dashes with a space on either side of the dash. Preferable over parentheses.

a. Ex: Itamir’s wedding – the day we’ve all been waiting for – is this Sunday.

4. Monday - Friday; 3 p.m. - 5 p.m. (correct) vs. Monday thru Friday or 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. (incorrect)

5. **With telephone numbers**, drop the parenthesis and use dashes.

a. Ex. 123 - 456 - 7890

6. **Toward NOT towards**

III. GRAMMAR

A. Always use **past** tense, most notably when referring to direct quotes.

B. **Punctuation** is always inside the quotation marks.

C. **Full dates** (month and day, or month + day + year) - abbreviate month

1. Ex: "The results were counted on Oct. 3, 2007."
2. Month only - spell out month Ex: This past October..."

D. **Numbers** - one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, 10, 11, 12...

E. **Serial commas** - include the last comma in a series.

F. Ex: "purple, orange, and yellow" or "Tom, Scott, or Harry."

G. Be careful about **homophones**:

1. then, than, they're, their, there
2. Further, farther
3. Your, you're

H. Before the word "which," there is **almost always** a comma (Non- restrictive clause)

I. If there are **passive sentences**, change those **verbs** to **active** ones.

J. **Hyphens** only occur when **two nouns are acting as an adjective to describe another noun**.

1. Ex: "he is a ten-year-old boy" is correct as is "he is ten years old."

K. **People** are "more than" not "over."

1. Ex: "More than 42 million people attended..."

L. "**Nearly**" - only for geographical distance

M. **Do not use a lot of acronyms**: It gets confusing

N. "**Firstly**" is not a word.

IV. CAPITALIZATION

11. **The Knight News** - always capitalized (including “The”)
12. **Quad** - Capitalized when referring to the specific area of Queens College, or any other university or campus.
13. **Professor** – Capitalized for titles, otherwise lowercase (except at the beginning of a sentence).
14. **Standings** - Do not capitalize class standings unless referring to a specific position.
15. “Free Hour” NOT free hour, “Academic Senate,” NOT academic senate, “Board of Trustees,” not board of trustees
16. **Semesters** – lower-case
 - a. Ex: fall, spring, winter, summer
17. **U.S.**, NOT US
18. In **headlines**, only the first letter of the first word is capitalized, except for names.
19. **Academic classes** – Capitalize official titles included in it (ex: English 303W Creative Nonfiction, Calculus II, or Media Studies 211).