



**BALL STATE
UNIVERSITY**

Writing Style and Usage Guidelines

Because of the many non-academic publications, brochures, advertisements, news releases, websites, emails, direct mail pieces, social media, and other communications produced by Ball State University, the following writing style and usage guidelines have been developed to promote consistency throughout communication and marketing presentation.

These guidelines, which will be frequently updated and published on the [Ball State Marketing and Communications website](#), cover the areas where there is generally the most confusion. Use initial capitalization, hyphenation, and italics as denoted with the entry.

In order, Marketing and Communications has prioritized the following style resources for reference:

1. Ball State's Writing Style and Usage Guidelines
2. The Associated Press Stylebook
3. Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary
4. The Chicago Manual of Style

Refer to bsu.edu/directory for spelling of people's names, courtesy titles, current telephone numbers, locations, and other information. Refer to bsu.edu/map for information about buildings.

For additional assistance, or for a style question that is not addressed in the resources mentioned above, feel free to call Marketing and Communications at 765-285-1560.

A

academic degrees The types of degrees that may be earned at Ball State include associate, bachelor's, master's, doctoral, and specialist in education.

- *Doctorate* or *doctoral degree* is usually preferred over the abbreviation *PhD* and others.
- The degree is always lowercase.
- Don't use periods with initials.
- Use initials found in *The Chicago Manual of Style*. A few Ball State degrees not listed in *Chicago* include:
 - Earned advanced degrees: DA (doctor of arts), EdD (doctor of education, note the case), EdS (educational specialist, note the case)
 - Honorary doctorate: ArtD (doctor of arts)

- For alumni identification, use the last two years of the graduation year. Initials for bachelor's degrees can be omitted in most cases but should be used for advanced degrees. Use spaces to separate multiple degrees.
- For alumni from the early 20th century, discretionally use all four digits of their graduation year when referring to older and more recent graduates.

Ex.: *James Dean, '69, said ...*

Ex.: *James Dean, who has a master's degree in biology, said ...*

Ex.: *James Dean, who earned a bachelor of science in biology, said ...*

Ex.: *James Dean, '85 MS '89, said ...*

Ex.: *A fund established by James Dean, 1924, was a critical element to the success of Dean James, '22.*

academic titles Capitalize academic titles before a name. Lowercase after. Lowercase professor or instructor when used before the name as a job description. The four faculty rankings at Ball State, from highest to lowest, are professor, associate professor, assistant professor, and instructor. It is important to be specific when identifying a faculty member by academic rank. When describing the nature of a faculty member's employment, use one of two terms: tenure track or contract. See also: [courtesy titles](#), [titles](#), [contract](#), and [tenure](#).

accents, tildes, umlauts, etc. See [special characters](#).

acronyms Use sparingly. Do not use on first reference if not immediately recognizable by the reader. Almost all organizations should be spelled out on first reference and then designated within parentheses. (Note: This is an exception to AP style.) Ex.: *Student Government Association (SGA)* on first reference, *SGA* on second.

Instead of acronyms, use *the group* or *the organization* on second reference as long as it is not confusing. Ex.: Instead of *the AASA is sponsoring the event*, say *the group is sponsoring the event*.

administration, Ball State See bsu.edu/president and select President's Cabinet for current senior staff members, their office locations, and phone numbers

advisor *Advisor* is preferred for all Ball State publications—an exception to AP style.

African American, Black See [race, ethnicity](#).

all caps Within text, avoid using all capital letters for an organization, product, event, etc. that is not an acronym. We will acknowledge trademarks, etc., by capitalizing the initial letter only in most cases.

Also avoid using all caps for emphasis. See also [emphasis](#).

Allegre restaurant Located in the Applied Technology Building. Food is prepared by students.

alumni Plural form of word referring to male graduates or a group of men and women graduates. Other terms are *alumnus* (male singular), *alumna* (female singular), *alumnae* (female plural). *Alum* (either male or female) is acceptable in some cases. Alternatively, use *graduate* or *graduates* when applicable.

and, ampersand (&) *And* is preferred. Exception: If the ampersand is part of a proper name or if space is extremely limited such as the headline in an ad or a table.

area codes Always list area codes with phone numbers. Do not use parentheses for area code. Ex: 765-285-1560 or 800-482-4BSU (4278).

Art and Journalism Building Not *Arts and Journalism Building*.

Art, School of Formerly Department of Art, bsu.edu/art

Arts and Communications Building Not *Art and Communication Building*.

Arts Terrace Lawn on the Quad, south of the David Owsley Museum of Art and north of *Beneficence*. See also: Quad.

Asian See race, ethnicity.

associate degree Note no apostrophe S.

Atrium Food court in the Art and Journalism Building.

attribution See said, says.

audience-goer Don't use. Someone is either a *theater-goer* or an *audience member*.

B

bachelor's degree, baccalaureate Either *bachelor's degree* or a *baccalaureate* is correct, not *baccalaureate degree*. Note the apostrophe S in *bachelor's degree*.

Ball Bearings Student-produced print and online publication. ballbearingsonline.com

Ball brothers Do not capitalize *brothers* when referring to the Muncie industrialists who founded Ball State. The five Ball brothers in 1917 bought the land and buildings of a small teacher-training school and gave it to the state. In 1918, the Eastern Division, Indiana State Normal School opened. To recognize the brothers, the state legislature named it Ball Teachers College in 1922. The Ball brothers, Edmund B., Frank C., George A., Lucius L., and William C., also established what is now called Ball Corp., which began as a Muncie-based glass manufacturing company known for its home-canning jars. Ball Corp. is now based in Broomfield, Colo., and produces metal and plastic packaging for food and beverage industries. Ball Corp. no longer makes canning jars. The Ball brothers also are the founders of IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital in Muncie. Note: Ball Brothers Foundation is an independent, private, family philanthropic organization established in 1926. When referring to the foundation, capitalize Ball Brothers on all references; do not use "the" before Ball Brothers Foundation when applicable.

Ball Communication Building Not *Ball Communications Building*.

Ball Memorial Hospital, IU Health On first reference, use *IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital*; on second reference and in headlines, *Ball Hospital* is acceptable.

Ball State community Use this phrase instead of “Ball State family.”

Ball State University On second reference and in headlines, *Ball State* is acceptable. Do not use *BSU* or *B.S.U.* Ball State University is the recognized umbrella name brand of the University, its colleges, departments, centers, institutes, and facilities. See also University.

Ball State University Foundation On second reference and in headlines, *Ball State Foundation* is acceptable. Also on second reference, *Foundation*. Founded in 1951, the Foundation invests gifts from private sources to support the University. It also creates scholarships and puts money toward faculty development programs and research. Effective July 1, 2015, Advancement Services, Alumni Center Operations, Alumni Programs, University Advancement, and University Development were brought under the Ball State University Foundation umbrella. All Foundation entities are identified as Ball State University Foundation. bsu.edu/bsufoundation

Ball State Welcome Center Renovated in 2010, the center is in Lucina Hall.

Beneficence Statue of a winged woman located in a courtyard near the Quad. The name *Beneficence* is a composition title and should be written in italic. References to the act of beneficence should not be in italics. She is nicknamed “Benny,” but that reference should be avoided unless used in a direct quotation. Muncie residents donated \$65,000 for the creation of the statue in the 1930s. The statue was created by Daniel Chester French. *Beneficence*, representing knowledge and giving back, has become the symbol of Ball State.

Benny Link Site where users can look up recognized student organizations and information about their events. bsu.edu/bennylink

Black, African American See race, ethnicity.

Black Student Association On second reference and in headlines, *BSA* is acceptable.

Board of Trustees Nine-member board appointed by Indiana’s governor is the ultimate policy-making authority of Ball State University. Officers are chair, vice chair, secretary, and assistant secretary. When referring to a trustee, capitalize initial letter of *trustee* before the name. Lowercase after. Also, the use of *Board* (capitalized) is acceptable for second reference. Do not capitalize “board of trustees” or a similar term in conjunction with a non-Ball State company name. See bsu.edu/trustees for current members.

Bracken House 2200 W. Berwyn Road, named after former Ball State Trustee Alexander Bracken and his wife, Rosemary, who bequeathed the house to Ball State for the purpose of providing the University president with a home. President Emeritus John Worthen and his wife were the first to move into the house in June 1999.

Bracken Library Archives and Special Collections On second reference and in headlines, *archives* is acceptable. Located in Bracken Library, it is a useful resource for Ball State, Muncie, and Delaware County history. See also University Libraries. bsu.edu/library

breaks Capitalize Fall Break, Thanksgiving Break, Winter Break, Spring Break, Summer Break. See also seasons.

broadcast stations Use this format: WTHR-TV 13, Indianapolis; WBST-FM 92.1, Muncie. Exception: If call letters end in TV, then hyphen TV is unnecessary, ex. WRTV 6, Indianapolis.

Brown Family Amphitheater

buildings On first reference, use full name. A shortened version is acceptable on second reference. Do not use two-letter initials. For a complete building list and descriptions, go to bsu.edu/map.

bulleted lists See [lists, bulleted](#).

Burriss Laboratory School On second reference and in headlines, *Burriss* is acceptable. Named after Benjamin Burriss, university president (1924–27), the K–12 school on Ball State’s campus established in 1929 as a department of the Teachers College, but it hasn’t been part of the Muncie Community Schools system since 1974. The Ball State Board of Trustees is its ultimate authority. School mascot is the owl. About 55 teachers instruct roughly 600 students. bsu.edu/burriss

Bursar and Loan Administration, Office of On second reference and in headlines, *bursar’s office* is acceptable. bsu.edu/bursar

C

campus community A commonly-used phrase; should refer to the students, faculty, and staff physically located on the Ball State campus.

Campus Information Center 765-285-5000. Also may be reached by dialing zero from campus phones. Call for student, faculty, facility, and departmental phone numbers and addresses.

capitalization Capitalize initial letter if in a proper name; otherwise use lowercase for a description. With a title, capitalize only before the name.

Ex.: *Aquatic Biology and Fisheries Center*, but *the center*

Ex.: *President Geoffrey S. Mearns*, but *Geoffrey S. Mearns, president of Ball State*

Ex.: *Department of Biology* (formal name), but *biology department* (description)

Ex.: *Associate Professor of Chemistry Jon Smyth* (formal title before the name), but *chemistry professor Jon Smyth* or *Jon Smyth, a chemistry professor* (description)

captions, cutlines A caption, also known as a cutline, should identify the people and events in a photograph and provide additional information the audience wouldn’t get from just looking at the art.

- Captions are written in present tense.
- A caption for a video is typically a one- or two-sentence introduction.
- For photos in galleries on the web, most cutlines should be one sentence. The caption for the first photo can be a slightly longer to provide basic information about the event. Captions can have full names on first reference, shortened version on second reference.
- When identifying more than one person in a photograph, indicate their place directionally with commas or parentheses, from the left, clockwise if applicable. If only two people are shown, use only one direction.

Ex.: *Hester Prynne, left, and Jane Eyre learn they've received an Emmy.*

Ex.: *Winners of the competition (from left) are Elizabeth Bennet, first; Ebenezer Scrooge, second; and Silas Marner, third.*

When one cutline serves multiple photos, a directional note should identify which information goes with which photos.

Ex.: *Top: Junior Juliet Capulet, left, and senior Romeo Montague demonstrate how to prepare a burrito. Middle: Romeo tops his creation with a dollop of sour cream. Bottom: The friends get ready to sample their cooking.*

Cardinals Always capitalize the initial letter. On second reference and in headlines, *Cards* is acceptable. Do not refer to women's teams as *Lady Cardinals* or *Lady Cards*.

Cardinal Cash Prepaid line of credit that can be used at various food and service locations on campus. Accounts are kept through the Office of Bursar and Loan Administration.
bsu.edu/cardinalcash

Cardinal Corps Student group that helps the university administration present programs and give tours for campus guests.

center Capitalize only if part of the proper name. Lowercase on second reference.

chairman, chairwoman, chairperson, chair Preferred style is title in lowercase following name. Capitalize the initial letter before a name if part of a formal title.

Charlie Cardinal Ball State's mascot. On second reference, *Charlie* is acceptable.

charter schools In 2001, the Indiana General Assembly approved legislation allowing four-year public universities, public school districts, and the mayor of Indianapolis to sponsor charter schools. Ball State is the first university in Indiana to sponsor charter schools. These public schools receive state funding, but are independent, nondiscriminating, nonsectarian entities that operate under a performance contract known as a charter. As a charter school's sponsor, Ball State does not run the schools but reserves the right to revoke a charter if a school fails to meet performance standards. bsu.edu/teachers/charter

Chirp! Chirp! A popular cheer Ball State sports fans use at Cardinal games.

Christmas Break Avoid usage. Use *Winter Break* instead.

Christy Woods 17-acre wooded area between University and Riverside Avenues, just east of Tillotson Avenue.

Class of ... Always capitalize initial letter. Ex: *John Doe was a member of the Class of 1988.*

class standing In communications in which the publication date is not obvious, use expected year of graduation (i.e. 2025, 2026) rather than *junior, senior*, etc.

coach Usually lowercase, especially before a full name. But when used in place of a name, capitalizing is acceptable: Ex: *He played for coach Rich Maloney ... "Put me in, Coach!" ... "I love playing for Coach Sallee."*

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colleges Ball State's seven colleges are:

- Estopinal College of Architecture and Planning, bsu.edu/ecap
- Miller College of Business, bsu.edu/business
- College of Communication, Information, and Media, bsu.edu/ccim
- College of Fine Arts, bsu.edu/cfa
- College of Health, bsu.edu/health
- College of Sciences and Humanities, bsu.edu/csh
- Teachers College (Please note: no apostrophe), bsu.edu/teachers

colloquium Plural is colloquia.

colons When the first word after a colon introduces a fragment, list, or phrase that's not a complete sentence, leave it lowercase. If the first word after a colon begins a full sentence or is a proper noun, capitalize it. In a headline, capitalize any word after a colon. Ex.: *There were three considerations: expense, time, and feasibility. ... She cared about only one thing: learning. ... The Ball State University Foundation makes it simple enough to engage with fellow alumni: Sign up for Cardinals Connect.*

commas, serial Ball State University style uses the serial comma in all mediums (exception to AP style).

Commencement, Ball State University Capitalize initial letter in all references when addressing Ball State's graduation ceremonies.

composition titles

Use italics for the following titles:

- books, magazines, newspapers
- computer games
- movies, TV programs
- music albums
- plays, operas
- works of art
- exhibitions

The titles of the following should be in quotations:

- poems
- songs
- title of a TV episode
- chapter of a book
- title of an article within a magazine, newspaper, T, etc.
- lectures and speeches

contract Term used in relation to faculty members who sign either one- or three-year contracts to teach at the University. Refer to such faculty members as *contract faculty*. See also academic titles, tenure.

Core Curriculum, University On first reference, capitalize University Core Curriculum, when referring to the set of classes required of all Ball State undergrads. Lowercase initial letter on second reference or to describe required classes in a major.

course names Include the course name and capitalize similar to a book title. Do not use course prefix and number alone. Ex. *MATH 165 Calculus 1*, Not: *MATH 165*

coursework One word.

courtesy titles On second reference, use courtesy titles such as Mr., Ms. Mrs., Miss, Mx., or Dr. (see Doctor). Honorific titles such as Governor, President, Vice President, Dean, Chair, Professor, and Trustee are also acceptable. Courtesy titles of Ball State faculty and staff are available at bsu.edu/directory.

Cow Path Walkway on the west side of campus, running north-south from the west side of LaFollette Complex to Riverside Avenue.

credit hours List credit hours by numerals. Ex.: *6 credit hours*

D

Daily News, The Ball State Daily News is acceptable on second reference. bsudailynews.com

dash The type of dash depends on the medium.

- In all mediums, in an exception to AP style, use an em dash (also called a long dash) without spaces. Use an en dash (also called a thin dash) to separate dates, times, and numbers; an en dash often substitutes for the word *to*. On a Mac, Option + Shift + Dash (-) makes an em dash, and Option + Dash (-) makes an en dash. On Windows, with a numeric keyboard, hold down the Alt key and type 0151 for an em dash or 0150 for an en dash.

dates With web copy, use dates (i.e. 1999) rather than number of years (i.e. 11 years). When referring to a specific month in web copy, include the year. Always write out the month (exception to AP style). Ex.: *The center was established in 1999. The institute started in January 2010.*

David Letterman Communication and Media Building Leading-edge building completed in 2007. Named after Ball State alumnus David Letterman. Note *Communication* is singular.

departments Capitalize when using the official name of the department. Lowercase on second reference. Ex.: *Department of History, history department*

Department of Media Formerly the Department of Telecommunications.

Disability Services Formerly Disabled Student Development. bsu.edu/disabilityservices

disabled, impaired As a University committed to diversity, we must be sensitive to how we write about people with disabilities. If a person's disability is relevant to the story, ask the source how he or she wishes to be described. Generally, the more sensitive terms are *disabled* or *impaired*. If the person uses a piece of equipment, such as a wheelchair, it is best to say he or she *uses* it

rather than *is confined to* it. For guidance, call Disability Services, 765-285-5293.

distinguished professor Distinguished professors are named by the provost and nominated by the dean of the faculty member's college. Distinguished professors receive a pay raise funded by external grants or gifts. The full title, derived from the name of an endowment, is capitalized everywhere it appears. If *distinguished professor* is used as a description, lowercase.

Ex. *Emma Bovary, the Snow White and Rose Red Distinguished Professor of Mathematics*, (formal title) Ex. *A study by distinguished mathematics professor Emma Bovary* (description)

Division of Enrollment Planning and Management Formerly Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services. *Admissions* is acceptable on second reference.

Division of Marketing and Communications *Marketing and Communications* can be used on second reference.

Division of Student Affairs Formerly Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services.

Doctor Individuals who have earned their doctorate are to be given the courtesy title of "Dr." throughout a medium unless source requests otherwise. This is an exception to AP style, which typically reserves the title for those who are medical doctors.

doctoral degree The words *doctorate* and *doctoral degree* are preferred over abbreviations *PhD*, etc. Grammar note: *doctorate* is a noun and *doctoral* is an adjective. One can hold a *doctorate* or a *doctoral degree*; *doctorate degree* is incorrect.

dorm The term *residence hall* is preferred.

dual credit, dual-credit Hyphenated when used as an adjective, but use *Dual Credit Program* when referring to the Division of Online and Strategic Learning initiative. Ex.: *Apply for dual credit, or the local high school student is taking dual-credit courses.*

Duck Pond A body of water located near Bethel and McKinley Avenues, across McKinley from Johnson Complex

E

Early Start A freshman initiative program to allow students to get a jumpstart on college the Summer before their first semester. The one- to three-week courses cover a variety of topics such as mathematics, television production, and the science of natural hazards.

East Central Indiana Regional area loosely defined as containing Delaware, Grant, Blackford, Jay, Randolph, Wayne, Henry, and Madison Counties.

ellipses (...) Use to indicate the deletion of words in condensing quotes, texts, and documents. Be careful not to distort the meaning of a quote by removing necessary words. Use a space before and after the ellipses.

email or email address No hyphen for *email*. On web pages, an email contact for an individual should link to his or her profile page. This is a spam-prevention measure.

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emeritus Title of honor given to some retired administrators and faculty, approved by the Board of Trustees. Capitalize when used before a name. Other terms are *emerita* (singular, female) and *emeriti* (plural) Ex.: *Ball State President Emeritus John Worthen*.

emphasis If emphasis is necessary in text, use boldface or italic on only a few words. More than that nullifies the emphasis. Do not use all caps or underline.

endowed chair Faculty member whose position was created by external gifts or grants.

Equal Employment Opportunity Use the Equal Employment Opportunity statement wording in all publications. Ex.: *Ball State University practices equal opportunity in education and employment and is strongly and actively committed to diversity within its community*.

Estopinal College of Architecture and Planning Named after 1979 Ball State graduate and former Board of Trustees member R. Wayne Estopinal. *ECAP* acceptable on second reference. Don't use CAP. bsu.edu/ecap

exams Not necessary to say examinations. Also, *finals* when appropriate.

F

faculty See [academic titles](#).

Fall Break

Fall semester

fees, tuition Use the familiar term *tuition* to refer to the cost of instruction. *Fees* generally refer to other charges such as housing and dining, health, and technology. Use *tuition and fees* or *total cost* to refer to the total cost.

finals week Always lowercase.

Financial Aid and Scholarships, Office of Formerly Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid. bsu.edu/finaid

first-generation student Ball State defines the term as those who are the first in their families to attend college, or whose parents or guardians did not complete a college degree. First-gens' experiences, backgrounds, stresses, and challenges related to college life can be unlike those of their peers.

first-year student Becoming a more commonly accepted phrase in place of *freshman*. Refers to a first-time undergraduate student.

floors, residence hall Always lowercase. Ex.: *Wilson Hall seventh floor* or *seventh floor of Wilson Hall*.

Foundational Sciences Building

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fraternities Spell out fraternity's name on first reference and indicate fraternity or sorority. On second reference, drop the word *fraternity*.

freshman, freshmen Alternatively, use *first-year student*. Don't use *frosh* unless in a headline.

Frog Baby The bronze sculpture by Edith Barretto Parsons was bought by Frank Ball, one of the original five Ball brothers, in 1937. Throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, she was in the art museum, where students rubbed her nose for good luck before a test. The statue was so damaged that she was placed in storage, then in an office. In 1993, *Frog Baby* was installed as a fountain with other frog sculptures. Today, students are more protective of the sculpture and routinely lend *Frog Baby* a scarf and hat when the weather turns cold.

fulfilling careers and meaningful lives This phrase is commonly used in quotes and promotional items. Be sure to always utilize *fulfilling career* instead of *successful career*. Also, when applicable, use the article "a" before both *fulfilling* and *meaningful*; ex.: *Our program builds the foundation for a fulfilling career and a meaningful life.*

full ride, full-ride Hyphenated when used as an adjective. Ex.: *He has a full ride.* or *He has a full-ride scholarship.*

fundraising, fundraiser Always one word.

G

GED A test used to determine high school equivalency. GED is acceptable on all references for General Educational Development. Please note: In 2014, Indiana started using TASC instead of GED to determine high school equivalency. TASC is acceptable on all references for Test Assessing Secondary Completion.

General Counsel, Office of Formerly Office of University Compliance. bsu.edu/legal

geothermal Preferred terms include *borehole* (instead of *well*) and *energy station* (instead of *energy center*). bsu.edu/geothermal

Glick Center for Glass, The Marilyn K. Glick Center acceptable on second reference. Opened in 2010, the center is home of the bachelor of fine arts (BFA) and master of fine arts (MFA) programs in glass art. It is named for one of Indiana's most influential supporters of the arts and an avid glass art collector.

Greek Life, Office of The *Office of Greek Life* is now referred to as the *Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life*.

Greenhouse, Dr. Joe and Alice Rinard Orchid Dedicated in 2014. *Rinard Greenhouse* or *greenhouse* acceptable on second reference.

grade point average Do not hyphenate. On second reference and in headlines, use *GPA*, not *G.P.A.*

grades When referring to a grade someone received, simply use the letter. Ex.: *He got a B on*

his test. When referring collectively to grades, do not use an apostrophe to make plural. Ex: *She settles only for As and Bs*.

graduate assistant On second reference and in headlines, *GA* is acceptable.

grateful Always try to use *grateful* instead of *thankful* when applicable.

H

handicapped, handicap Do not use *handicapped* or *handicap* to describe people with disabilities. See [disabled, impaired](#).

headlines, titles Headlines and titles should be active and concise. Avoid vague, generic headlines.

- Regardless of medium, use title case (capitalizing principal words—an exception to AP style).
- In news releases and electronic communications, single quotes are used in headlines and subheads for quotations and to distinguish composition titles.
- Well-known acronyms are acceptable, especially if they are better known that way (Ex. *JPG, NCAA*). However, avoid using acronyms a general audience would not immediately recognize.
- Use names alone only if they are familiar to the campus community (Ex: *Obama*). For someone who is not widely known, include one to three words to identify them (Ex. *biology professor Catherine Earnshaw, Spanish major Don Quixote*).
- Be wary of nouns, verbs, and possessives that have been split from their modifiers.
- For subheadlines under a main headline, use sentence case (capitalizing only the first word and proper nouns) and do not use a period. But for paragraph headers/kickers within an article, use title case.

Health Professions Building

healthcare One word, non-hyphenated.

historic, an Always use *an historic* instead of *a historic* to refer to a notable happening.

Homecoming Capitalize all references when referring to Ball State's.

Honors College Academic program at Ball State that requires its students to substitute core courses with honors courses emphasizing class discussion and essay writing instead of objective testing. Students must complete honors curriculum and a senior thesis project while maintaining a 3.33 grade point average or higher; *honors courses* and *honors education* are lowercase. bsu.edu/honors

hospital See Ball Memorial Hospital.

Housing and Residence Life, Office of Oversees all residence halls and aspects of on-campus student living.

http:// Do not use when listing website addresses.

hyperlinks On web pages, hyperlinks should be embedded in the text. Ex: See our [financial aid section](#) for more information. Not: Go to [bsu.edu/fincaid](#) for more information. Be careful not to include punctuation such as commas and periods in linked text.

I

identification In a typical situation, identify student sources by first and last name, class standing or expected year of graduation, and major on first reference. Ex.: *John Doe, a junior majoring in business*. Include age, hometown, and other information when pertinent.

Identify faculty sources by name and academic title or job description on first reference. If the sources has more than one title, use only the one most relevant to the story.

Ex: *Jane Doe, assistant professor of mathematics... History professor John Doe...*

Use last name and a courtesy title on second reference. Include the abbreviation *Jr.* only when using a full name. Do not use a comma to separate *Jr.* from name. When a story includes more than one source with the same last name, you can use full names on every reference, courtesy titles, or job titles. Ex.: *Mayor Doe liked the movie. Professor Doe did not.*

ID number

Immersive Learning Guided by a faculty mentor, interdisciplinary student teams create unique, high-impact learning experiences that result in real-world results for community partners. The term *Immersive Learning* should be capitalized when referring to a University-sanctioned high-impact practice. [bsu.edu/immersive](#)

Indiana Academy for Science, Mathematics, and Humanities On second reference and in headlines, *academy* is acceptable. Opened in 1990, it's a residential high school on Ball State's campus for gifted and talented juniors and seniors from throughout Indiana. Enrollment is about 300. Students live in Wagoner Hall. The academy and Burriss Laboratory School are overseen by Ball State. [bsu.edu/academy](#)

initiative Lowercase if it is a description, capitalize if the word is part of the formal name.

Ex. *Hybrid Design Technologies initiative* (*Hybrid Design Technologies* is the name, *initiative* is the description)

Ex. *sustainability initiatives* (both words are descriptions) Ex. *Global Reporting Initiative* (*initiative* is part of the name)

Interfraternity Council On second reference and in headlines, *IFC* is acceptable. Governing body for Ball State's fraternities.

internet Lowercase.

intramural

J

K

L

Lady Cardinals, Lady Cards Do not use these terms to refer to female athletes at Ball State. They are simply the Cardinals.

LaFollette Field Grass field located off McKinley Avenue on the west side of Worthen Arena. Students may use it for personal recreation. Campus events such as concerts, festivals, and homecoming activities also happen here.

Latino, Latina See race, ethnicity.

Learning and Development (L&D) The Office of Learning and Development (L&D, formerly Training and Development) provides learning opportunities to professional and staff employees at Ball State. bsu.edu/hrs/learndev

lightpainting One word, lowercase.

Lilly Endowment Inc. lillyendowment.org

links See hyperlinks.

list, bulleted If bulleted elements are sentence fragments, start with lowercase letters and omit periods or semicolons at the end. If lists are full sentences, start with a capital letter and end with a period.

Ex.

This bulleted list has:

- *a sentence fragment*
- *another sentence fragment*
- *yet another sentence fragment*

This bulleted list has the following:

- *This is a complete sentence.*
- *This also is a complete sentence.*
- *And this third item is a complete sentence.*

living-learning community Students in a living-learning community (LLC) live with peers who have similar areas of study or interests such as nursing or emerging media. Lowercase if describing living-learning communities in a general sense; capitalize if referring to a specific LLC by its formal name (ex. *Discover Living-Learning Community*).

login, log in One word as a noun or adjective, two as a verb. This is consistent with AP style and more common, even though it is an exception to Webster's, which hyphenates the noun and adjective.

M

major typically lowercase. See bsu.edu/admissions/majors for complete listing. Ex: *She is a*

marketing major.

master's degree Note apostrophe S.

McKinley Avenue Main north-south street running through campus.

MBA No periods; *master of business administration* on first reference.

Mid-American Conference On second reference and in headlines, *MAC* is acceptable. Never use *MAC Conference*. Ball State joined in 1973. Home office is in Cleveland. mac-sports.com

Middletown Nickname for Muncie from sociologists Robert S. and Helen Merrell Lynd's studies, the first of which was published in 1929. The Lynds chose Muncie as a typical small city representing contemporary American life and a barometer of American social trends. Note: Middletown, Indiana, is about 15 miles southeast of Muncie. MiddletownUSA.com covers news about Middletown, Ohio. For more about the Lynds' work, visit the Center for Middletown Studies at bsu.edu/middletown.

midterm One word, no hyphen.

Midwest Intercollegiate Volleyball Association On second reference and in headlines, *MIVA* is acceptable. Ball State men's volleyball team is a member of the Midwest 10 Volleyball Conference, a division of *MIVA*. miva-vball.org

Miller College of Business Named after businessman Wallace T. Miller Jr. *Miller College*, *MCOB*, and *business college* acceptable on second reference. bsu.edu/business

Minnetrista A museum center for cultural exploration, offering exhibits and programs that focus on nature, history, gardens, and art. Note that the name is only one word. minnetrista.net

more than The phrase *more than* is preferred when referring to the quantifier meaning greater in size, amount, extent, or degree. Avoid *over*.

Museum of Art, David Owsley Opened in 1935, the David Owsley Museum of Art is located in the Fine Arts Building. In 2011, the museum was named for longtime benefactor David Owsley, the son of Alvin and Lucy Ball Owsley and the grandson of Frank C. Ball, one of the five original Ball brothers. *Owsley Museum* and *DOMA* acceptable on second reference. bsu.edu/artmuseum

N

National Panhellenic Conference An umbrella organization for 26 international women's fraternities and sororities. On second reference, *NPC* is acceptable.

National Pan-Hellenic Council On second reference and in headlines, *NPHC* is acceptable. Governing body of Ball State's black and Hispanic fraternities and sororities.

NCAA Acceptable on all references for National Collegiate Athletic Association.

Neely Avenue Commonly misspelled Neeley.

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nicknames Use a nickname in place of a person's real name when it is the way that person prefers to be known. Ex.: *Chuck Smith* instead of *Charles Smith*.

Use quotation marks if you are inserting it into a person's full name. Ex.: Cole "*The Irish Bull*" McGrath.

When referring to Ball State sports teams, use *Cardinals* or *Cards* for both men and women. Do not refer to women's sports teams as *Lady Cardinals* or *Lady Cards*.

numerals Use numerals for 10 or greater. Spell out whole numbers one through nine. Use numerals in all cases for percentages, credit hours, grade point averages, dollar amounts, age, and dimensions. Spell out numerals at beginning of a sentence. Use numeral for decimals, write out fractions less than one.

Ex: *the first century, the 21st century, 200 students, 6 credit hours, 2 percent, increased by one-third, 2.5 grade point average, \$3 million, 6-foot-10*. Note: This is an exception to Chicago style.

O

Odyssey Creative journal published by Honors College students.

offices Capitalize the initial letter when using the official name of the office. Lowercase on second reference. Ex.: *Office of Admissions, admissions office*

off campus, off-campus *Off campus* is a noun. *Off-campus* is an adjective. Ex.: *He lives off campus. They live in an off-campus house.*

on campus, on-campus *On campus* is a noun. *On-campus* is an adjective. Ex: *He lives on campus. They like the atmosphere of on-campus living.*

off-campus centers Don't use a colon when describing University-wide off-campus centers. Ex.: *Ball State Fishers; Ball State Fort Wayne; Ball State Indianapolis*. Do use colon when referring to a specific Ball State college's off-campus center. Ex.: *ECAP: Indy* (note the space after the colon).

One Ball State Day The University's annual 24-hour online fundraising event. *OBSD* is acceptable on second reference.

online One word always.

Online and Strategic Learning The Division of Online and Strategic Learning is a one-stop shop for teaching and learning that serves all of the Ball State campus. This unit brings together the support and services provided by the former Division of Online and Distance Education, iLearn, and Office of Educational Excellence. bsu.edu/strategiclearning

orientation Lowercase in general uses, capitalize if describing an event.

P

Panhellenic Council Governing body of Ball State's sororities. See [National Panhellenic Conference](#).

PDF Acceptable in all references for Portable Document Format. In web copy, please indicate if a hyperlink connects to a PDF in this manner: (*PDF*).

percent Spell out instead of using % symbol (exception where space is extremely limited such as ad headlines and tables). Use figures instead of spelling out numbers. Ex.: *3 percent*

percent, percentage point The difference between *percent* and *percentage point* can best be illustrated by example. If a tax goes up from 4 percent to 5 percent, it is a 1 percentage point increase, or one unit of 100. However, the tax itself is rising by one-fourth, one unit of four, or about 25 percent.

Performing Arts Center Current name of future performance venue planned for the northeast corner of University and McKinley Avenues.

PhD No periods. *Doctorate* or *doctoral degree* preferred. See [academic degrees](#).

philanthropy, philanthropic Use *philanthropy* as a noun for the act of doing a good deed. Do not use *philanthropic* as an adjective for a specific event.

phone numbers Always include the area code and use this format: *765-555-4444 ext. 27*. If the phone number includes a word, list both the word and the number and use this format: *800-482-4BSU (4278)*.

photo credits Use the photographer's name/*Ball State University* or *Ball State University* alone for photos shot by University photographers. If photos are provided, use *Courtesy of ...*

Planetarium, Charles W. Brown Completed in 2014, the Charles W. Brown Planetarium is the largest in Indiana, with 148 seats and a 52-foot-diameter dome. *Brown Planetarium* and *planetarium* are acceptable on second reference. bsu.edu/planetarium

president When referring to Ball State's president, simply say *president*. Lowercase when the title does not appear before the name. Ex.: *President Geoffrey S. Mearns attended ...*, *The president attended ...*

Princeton Review, The Use plain, not italic. This is a company, not a publication.

program Lowercase if it is a description, capitalize if the word is part of the formal name.
Ex.: *Freshman Connections program* (*Freshman Connections* is the name, *program* describes it)
Ex.: *journalism program* (both words are descriptions)
Ex.: *Adult Physical Fitness Program* (*program* is part of the formal name)

provost Ball State University's chief academic officer and the executive vice president for academic affairs. The provost acts as an advisor to the president, works with deans and faculty, coordinates and evaluates academic programs, and serves as a liaison with other academic institutions and with the Indiana Commission for Higher Education. Capitalize title before name. Lowercase after.

Provost Immersive Learning Grant Ball State internal grant, formerly called the Provost Initiative

Grant, to provide startup funds for immersive learning projects. Money can be used to fund an entire project, equipment, some travel, and buyouts.

Pruis, John J Former Ball State president. Note no period after the middle initial.

publication titles See composition titles.

Q

Quad, the Grassy, tree-lined area on southwest side of campus. It is near the David Owsley Museum of Art, Cooper Science Complex, North and West Quadrangle buildings, and Ball Gymnasium.

R

Race, ethnicity At Ball State, we are committed to diversity. As part of that commitment, we must be sensitive to how we describe race and ethnicity and when it is appropriate to mention it. Do not mention a source's race or ethnicity unless it is relevant to the story. If it is relevant, ask the source how he or she prefers to be identified. If a source's race or ethnicity must be mentioned and it is not possible to ask the source, use the following preferred terms:

- *Black*. Exception: Use *African American (no hyphen)* if the source requests the term.
- *Asian*. If possible, identify by country of origin or ancestry. Ex.: *He is Chinese-American. She is Korean.*
- *Native American* If possible, use the person's tribal affiliation. Ex.: *He is Cherokee*. Use *American Indian* only if part of a proper name. Ex: the *American Indian Movement*.
- *Latino, Latina, Latinx* refers to people with ethnic and cultural backgrounds in Latin American countries. *Latina* is the feminine form; *Latinx* is gender neutral. *Latino, Latina, Latinx* is acceptable for people of Brazilian origin. Hispanic refers only to people with origins in Spanish-speaking countries. When possible when dealing with someone of Latin American descent, identify the person's country of origin or ethnic background. Ex.: *She is Mexican-American. He is Colombian.*

radio stations Ball State is affiliated with two radio stations:

- Indiana Public Radio—Also known as IPR, this is the local National Public Radio (NPR) affiliate. IPR is a five station network: WBST 92.1 FM, Muncie, WBSB 89.5 FM, Anderson, WBSW 90.1 FM, Marion, WBSJ 91.7 FM, Portland, and WBSH 91.1 FM, Hagerstown-New Castle. bsu.edu/ipr
- WCRD 91.3 FM—Student-run station. wcrd.net

ranking Follow style for numerals. Ex.: *The program is ranked fourth in the nation, improving from 11th place last year.* See: numerals.

registrar For all references, either *registrar* or *registrar's office* is acceptable. Through the Office of the Registrar, students can register for classes, check grades, view their transcripts, seek other information about their scholastic status, and more. bsu.edu/registrar

residence hall Use *residence hall*, not *dorm*. bsu.edu/housing

Residence Hall Association With second reference and headlines, *RHA* is acceptable.
bsu.edu/rha

resident assistant On second reference and in headlines, *RA* is acceptable. Plural is *RAs*.

room numbers List in this format: Bracken Library, Room 261.

ROTC Acceptable abbreviation for *Reserve Officers' Training Corps* on all references. On first reference, use whichever military branch is appropriate. Ex: *Army ROTC, Naval ROTC, Air Force ROTC*. bsu.edu/rotc

S

said, says In general, *said* is preferred for attribution. *Says* or *said* is a neutral word and allows the reader to focus on the quote. Other words, such as *acknowledges, claims, contends, and states* carry more meaning and can apply a bias to a story. Different publications have different guidelines concerning the use of *said* versus *says*. News releases generally use *said*.

salutations Use a colon, rather than a comma, after using a salutation at the beginning of various correspondence. Ex.: *Dear Faculty and Staff:*

Scheumann Stadium The stadium can seat up to 22,500. It was built in 1967 and underwent major renovations in 2007. Former Ball State football player John Scheumann and his wife, June, made a generous contribution toward the renovations, and the stadium was named in their honor. Its full name is the John B. and June M. Scheumann Stadium, but Scheumann Stadium is acceptable on all references. Its nickname, The Scheu, is acceptable in some instances. The facility includes the Paul and Pat Kozel Media Center. Other places of note are the John W. and Janice B. Fisher Football Training Complex, the Ron and Joan Venderly Football Center, and the Scheumann Family Indoor Practice Facility.

School of Journalism and Strategic Communication Formerly the Department of Journalism. Note: it is *Communication*, not *Communications*.

School of Kinesiology Formerly the School of Physical Education, Sport, and Exercise Science.

Scramble Light Nickname for the intersection of McKinley and Riverside Avenues. Pedestrians can press a button at each corner that stops traffic in all directions and allows those on foot to cross the street. A similar stop is at the intersection of McKinley and Neely Avenues, which should not be referred to as the *Scramble Light*.

seasons Capitalize *Spring, Summer, Winter, and Fall* when making generic references to semesters. See also: breaks, semester.

Self-Service Banner

semester Lowercase.

sexist writing, avoiding Here are a few techniques to avoid using unnecessary gender-specific
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language:

- Use gender neutral nouns such as *spokesperson, department chair, mail carrier, police officer, etc.*
- Use plurals, which use *they* on second reference. Ex.: *Students need to hand in their applications by March 10.*
- If applicable, use second person (*you*). Ex.: *You need to fill out your application by March 10.*
- When using the plural would result in awkward writing, the singular *they* is acceptable for indefinite pronouns such as *everyone, someone, and nobody*, and for non-gender-specific nouns referring to people such as *student or employee*. (Note: For entities such as businesses, organizations, and schools, use *it*.) Ex.: *Your student needs fill out their application by March 10.*
- *He or she* and *his or her* are acceptable in more formal communications, but use sparingly.

social media Official social media accounts for Ball State University include:

- Facebook: facebook.com/ballstate
- Instagram: [@ballstateuniversity](https://instagram.com/ballstateuniversity) or instagram.com/ballstateuniversity
- X (formerly Twitter): [@ballstate](https://x.com/ballstate) or x.com/ballstate ([@ballstate_alert](https://x.com/ballstate) provides crisis communication)
- TikTok: [@ballstate](https://tiktok.com/@ballstate) or tiktok.com/@ballstate
- YouTube: youtube.com/user/officialballstate
- LinkedIn: linkedin.com/school/ball-state-university

special characters In all content, use the spelling without diacritics for common nouns and adjectives (ex. *résumé* for print, but *resume* for social media).

spokesman, spokeswoman, spokesperson All are acceptable. Preferred style is title in lowercase following name. Capitalize before a name if part of a formal title.

Sponsored Projects Administration Created in 2015 by the merger of the Sponsored Programs Office and the Contracts and Grants Office, the Sponsored Projects Administration helps faculty and staff apply for external funds for research, administers award funds, and ensures compliance with regulations. bsu.edu/spa

sports teams Ball State is a member of the Mid-American Conference and holds Division I status for all its intercollegiate athletic teams. *MAC* on second reference is acceptable, but do not use “conference” after *MAC*. Men’s volleyball is the only team not in the MAC. It is part of the Midwest Intercollegiate Volleyball Association (*MIVA* on second reference).

See also [Mid-American Conference](https://www.midamericanconference.com/) and [Midwest Intercollegiate Volleyball Association](https://www.midwestvolleyball.org/). ballstatesports.com

Spring Break

states When the name of a state name appears in the body of a text, spell it out. State abbreviations should also be avoided in headlines where possible. States should be abbreviated according to AP style in all mediums except formal invitations. Ex.: *Biology student Chad Smith of Fort Wayne, Ind., spoke at the ceremony.*

street names When referring to two street names or two residence halls or buildings, capitalize “Streets,” “Avenues,” “Halls,” etc., as an exception to AP style. Ex.: *McKinley and Riverside Avenues. Park and Pruis Halls.*

student-athlete

Student Center On first reference *L.A. Pittenger Student Center* or *Pittenger Student Center* is acceptable. *Student Center* on all references is acceptable for an audience internal to Ball State. Lemuel Arthur Pittenger was Ball State president from 1927 to 1942. bsu.edu/studentcenter

Student Government Association On second reference and in headlines, *SGA* is acceptable. bsu.edu/sga

Student Recreation and Wellness Center, Jo Ann Gora Center, Gora Student Recreation and Wellness Center, and the center are acceptable on second reference. Do not use *JAGSRWC* or *SRWC*.

Student Senate Policy-making body of Student Government Association.

Summer session/semester

superscript Avoid using superscript except for scientific or mathematical notations. Ex.: *The MBA program is ranked 13th in the nation.* Be mindful that Microsoft Word will often automatically change ordinal numbers to superscript.

syllabus Plural is *syllabi*.

T

Taftali Center for Capital Markets and Investing, A. Umit Taftali Center acceptable on second reference. Opened in 2010, the center simulates a real-world financial environment. It's in the Whiting Business Building.

tagline Ball State's tagline is “We Fly.” Note that both words are capitalized.

Tally Short for Student Center Tally Food Court, often called the Tally. Note it is spelled without an E.

TASC Acceptable on all references for Test Assessing Secondary Completion. In 2014, Indiana started using TASC instead of GED to determine high school equivalency.

telephone numbers Do not use parentheses. Always include area code. Ex.: *765-285-1560.*

television station Ball State is affiliated with WIPB-TV 49, Muncie, a PBS station. wipb.org

tenure track Term used to describe faculty members who are serving a seven-year trial period prior to being nominated by their college's dean and the University provost and then approved by the Board of Trustees to be tenured, which means they keep their job as long as they continue to

meet University job performance standards. Members of the tenure-track faculty usually are expected to be active in their fields through research or publication. See contract.

Thanksgiving Break

theatre, theater References to movie or other performing theaters—and other generic usages—should use the “er” spelling unless it involves an “re” proper name.

thesis Plural form is theses.

time-date-location Follow this formation to list key information for events for most mediums. Ex.: *The concert is being held at 6:30 p.m. March 13 at Emens Auditorium.* Some mediums, such as posters and digital signs, might require a more customized formation to list this information.

time elements Use a.m. or p.m. Use midnight or noon rather than 12 a.m. or 12 p.m. Muncie is in Eastern time. If a time zone is required, use *Eastern time* or *Eastern* rather than EST or EDT.

titles In general, a title is lowercase after a name and capitalized before a name.

Ex.: *President Geoffrey S. Mearns; Geoffrey S. Mearns, president of Ball State University*

If a title is more than a few words long, try to place it after the name. Capitalize titles, but not job descriptions. Ex.: *President Geoffrey S. Mearns; researcher Jack Sprat*

See also: academic titles and courtesy titles.

Tobacco-Free Policy Effective August 1, 2013, the policy bars the use of tobacco in all campus buildings and grounds, with the exception of personal vehicles with window rolled up and tailgating at home football games. It replaces the Smoke-Free Policy. bsu.edu/tobaccofree

tuition, fees See fees, tuition.

TTY preferred style for phone number for those who are hearing impaired.

U

unique Avoid misuse. If something is unique, there is nothing else like it. There are no degrees of uniqueness, so it would be wrong to say something is *very unique*. Use *special* or *distinct* for something that is unusual but not one of a kind.

University Capitalize *University* when it stands alone when referring to Ball State. Lowercase when the word is used in a general sense. Ex.: *The University provides a world-class education. A university must educate its students.*

University Libraries Name for the network of Ball State libraries and resource centers. There are three: Architecture Library, Bracken Library, and Science-Health Science Library. bsu.edu/library

University Media Services Formerly University Teleplex.

University Police Department On second reference, police department is acceptable. bsu.edu/police

University Senate On second reference and in headlines, *senate* is acceptable. Comprises faculty and staff. bsu.edu/senate

University-wide On a related note, do not hyphenate *nationwide*, *statewide*, or *worldwide*. See University for capitalization.

U.S. News & World Report For clarity, we will put a space between *U.S.* and *News*. Also note the ampersand.

V

vice president Never hyphenate. When title appears before a name, both words are capitalized. Both words are lowercase after a name. Ex.: *Vice President Mike Pence* and *Mike Pence, vice president*.

Village, The Four-block stretch of University Avenue just east of campus, from McKinley Avenue to Dicks Street. Features restaurants, bars, coffee shops, bookstores, and convenience stores. Note capitalization of *The*. Use *Village revitalization plan*—not project—when referring to the University’s ambitious development plan for the district.

Virginia B. Ball Center for Creative Inquiry On second reference and in headlines, *Virginia Ball Center* is acceptable. It is under the umbrella of the Office of Entrepreneurial Learning. bsu.edu/vbc

W

web addresses Omit *http://* and *www.* (ex.: *bsu.edu*). If the last word in the sentence is a URL, the sentence ends in a period.

website One word, lowercase; *site* is also acceptable. Also, *web*, *webpage*, *webcast*, *webinar*. Content for most bsu.edu websites employs AP style with the following exceptions:

- Use the serial comma.
- Lowercase degrees and don’t use periods in the initials (for more, see [academic degrees](#)).
- Use Ball State style for bulleted lists (see [lists, bulleted](#)).
- Use title case on headers (capitalize principal words).
- Omit spaces around dashes.
- Drop the hyphen in all e- words such as email, ebook, and ebusiness.
- Drop the hyphen in the prefix *co-* unless it’s needed for clarity (ex. *co-owner*). Note: Generally, AP, *The Chicago Manual of Style*, and *Merriam-Webster* drop the hyphen for prefixes, including for *pre-* and *post-*, unless it’s needed for clarity (ex. *pre-election*, *post-master’s certificate*). The hyphen in *pre-* is maintained for majors (ex. *pre-business*, *pre-medicine*).

For technical reasons and clarity:

- Avoid special characters (accents, tildes, umlauts, etc.).
- For composition titles, use double quotes in running text and captions and single quotes in other fields.
- If you need to emphasize information, use boldface on only a few words. Don’t underline

or use all caps.

wellbeing One word, not hyphenated.

Women's and Gender Studies Program Formerly Women's Studies Program.

Winter Break Use instead of Christmas Break.

work-study

X

Y

Z

ZIP code Not *Zip Code* or *zip code*.