

Viterbo University Communications Style Guide

(Revised February 2008)

This Style Guide is designed to help you better understand the style guidelines that help our internal and external publications remain consistent. Viterbo University's unique communications style was developed to suit our publication and communication needs. Among the publications consulted in developing this style are the *Associated Press (AP) Stylebook and Libel Manual* and the fourth edition of the *New American Heritage Dictionary*.

In an effort to keep non-academic writing styles consistent communications and marketing has put the Viterbo University style to paper for use by campus administration, faculty, and staff. If you have questions about Viterbo University style, please call the communications and marketing office at 608-796-3047 or email communication@viterbo.edu.

Abbreviations and acronyms: To avoid confusing the reader, use abbreviations and acronyms sparingly and do not use ones that your readers would not understand. Spell out the first reference of words with acronyms. The acronym can follow in subsequent references. Example: *Some of our administrative staff belong to the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE). CASE is a national organization for advancement and communications professionals.*

Academic degrees:

- Only use academic degrees and abbreviations when it is necessary to establish someone's credentials. In most cases, mentioning academic degrees and title is not needed for internal communication. It is most appropriate for new hires, promotions, and for use in professional, academic circles. Use appropriate punctuation when you need to refer to a degree, avoid an abbreviation and use, instead, a phrase such as: *Mort Morehouse, who has a doctorate in psychology.*
- When you need to list several people with advanced degrees in material for use in professional circles, you may use abbreviations. Example: *Apryl Denny, Ph.D.; Keith Knutson, Ph.D.; and Marlene Fisher, M.A.*
- Never precede a name with a courtesy title and follow it with the degree abbreviation in the same reference. Wrong: *Dr. Mike Collins, Ph.D.* Correct: *Dr. Mike Collins, a chemist.*
- AP style specifies that the title *Dr.* should only be used in conjunction with a medical degree. Exceptions are permitted when it is necessary in professional circles and when the discipline is identified. See **President**.
- When spelling out degrees, use an apostrophe for *bachelor's degree* or *master's*, etc.
- When listing a degree after a person's name, it should be done as follows: *Sue Smith, who earned a Master of Science in Nursing degree from Viterbo University, is working at Mayo Clinic.* Or, *Ann Doe, who has a bachelor's degree in chemistry, is currently pursuing her medical degree.*
- Regarding capitalization of degrees: the complete and formal name of a degree should be capitalized. Example: *Master of Science in Nursing degree.* If an abbreviated version, or an incomplete form of a degree is being used it is not capitalized. Example: *Ann Doe received a master's degree in nursing.*

Addresses: When referring to numbered addresses, i.e. 900 Viterbo Dr., use abbreviations (Ave., Blvd., and St.). Spell out the words and capitalize them when they are a formal street name without a number (Winnebago Street). Lowercase and spell out the word when used alone or with other street names (Winnebago and Jackson streets).

Numbered streets should always be written out – whether a numbered address or not: *210 Ninth Street South, Eighth Street*. Note that when streets have north, south, east, and west attached, they should be located at the end of the address.

Postal state abbreviations for use only with addresses are (see **States**): AL, AK, AZ, AR, CA, CO, CT, DE, FL, GA, HI, ID, IL, IN, IA, KS, KY, LA, ME, MD, MA, MI, MN, MS, MO, MT, NE, NV, NH, NJ, NM, NU, NC, ND, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VT, VA, WA, WV, WI, WY.

Admission: The proper reference for the Viterbo University Office of Admission is singular, not plural.

Alphabetizing names: Alphabetize by the first letter of the last name. A hyphenated name is treated as one element and is alphabetized by the first letter of the first last name. For non-hyphenated names alphabetize by the second last name. The following is in correct alphabetical order: *Mary T. James, Susan Moore Johnson, John Klein, Ann Marshall, Jane Moore-Johnson*.

Alumnus, alumni, alumna, alumnae, alum: Alumnus refers to a man who has attended a school; alumni is the plural version. Use alumna in references a woman who has attended a school; alumnae in the plural. Alumni is used when referring to a group of men and women who attend a particular school. Alum may be used to casually refer to an individual or group who attend a particular school.

Ampersand (&): Use the ampersand when it is part of a company's formal name: *Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater La Crosse*. The ampersand should not otherwise be used in place of the word *and*.

Athletics: Note the use of athletics as plural in reference to the Viterbo athletics department and the director of athletics.

Board room: Two words. Capitalize both words when used in conjunction with the building. Example: *The meeting is in the board room*. Or, *The meeting is in the Reinhart Center Board Room*.

Book titles: See **Composition titles**.

Broad field: Two words

Building names: The proper names of buildings should be capitalized; capitalize the word *building* if it is part of the formal name.

Century: Lowercase, spelling out numbers less than 10: *the first century, the 20th century*.

Chair: Capitalize as a formal title before a name (*Biology Committee Chair Jane Doe*); lowercase when it follows a name (*Jane Doe, Biology Committee chair*). Do not use chairman, chairwoman, or chairperson.

Class rank: In common usage, use either example: *Freshman John Smith is a math major at Viterbo. John Smith, freshman, is majoring in math at Viterbo.* Do not use *freshmen* unless referring to more than one person.

In table formats, you may use the following abbreviations: *Fr. (freshman), So. (sophomore), Jr. (junior), Sr. (senior).*

Class year: For Viterbo University alumni, refer to the year of graduation following the person's name whenever possible in the first or second mention of their name. Acceptable references are: *Stan Smith '75; Stan Smith, who graduated in 1975; or Stan Smith, a 1975 graduate of Viterbo.*

Clubs and organizations: Capitalize the full name of clubs and organizations: *Connect Club, Agape, Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU)*, etc. Second references may use *the club, the organization*, or the group's acronym, e.g. *WAICU*.

College and university names: Capitalize when part of the proper name: *Viterbo University*. Lowercase university in less formal reference when it stands alone: *The university recently established new admission criteria.*

Capitalize schools within the university: *The School of Letters and Sciences, the School of Nursing.*

Refer to the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse by its full name on first reference and as UW-La Crosse on subsequent references. Refer to Western Technical College by its full name on first reference and its acronym, WTC, on subsequent references. In internal publication, you may refer to them as UW-L and WTC on all references.

For colleges and universities outside of La Crosse, refer to them by their complete name and follow with the state if outside of Wisconsin. Include the city if it's not part of the college or university name. For example: *University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire* or *University of Iowa – Iowa City* does not need city or state because they're included in the title. However, *Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.* or *Carleton College, St. Paul, Minn.* needs reference to the city and state.

Committees: Capitalize the complete name of a committee when using it: the Administrative Assembly, the Humanities Committee, or the Staff Assembly. However, do not capitalize if you use the word committee only in reference. For example, *The committee agenda is lengthy.*

Composition titles: Italicize all titles of literary, musical, and theatrical works, performances, and recordings. For example, books, TV shows, plays, CDs, movies, operas, song titles, and poetry.

Courses: Capitalize the proper name of courses: *Educational Psychology 215 is held in the Brophy Nursing Center*. Lowercase all references that do not use the proper title: *He picked up a course in psychology*.

Dashes: See **Punctuation**.

Dates: Use Arabic numbers but without the st, nd, rd, or th. Wrong: *June 30th*. Correct: *June 30*. See **Months and year**.

Days of the week: Capitalize them. Spell out the day of the week when both day and date are used together. Example: *Monday, July 15*. Do not abbreviate, except when needed in a tabular format: *Sun, Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat* (three letters, without period, to facilitate tabular composition).

Decision making/Decision-making: Use a hyphen when it is describing something, *decision-making resources*. Do not use a hyphen if it is something you're doing, *I have some decision making to do on the new job*.

Departments and offices: Use lowercase except for words that are proper nouns: *the department of history, the history department, the department of English, the English department, the registrar's office, etc.*

Division: Viterbo athletics are a part of NAIA Division II.

E.g.,: There should always be a comma after it. This is the abbreviation for the Latin words *exempli gratia* meaning "for example." Example: *There are a number of different species of fish that are "bottom dwellers," e.g., catfish and carp.*

Email: Written as one word in Viterbo University publications and materials. No hyphen and a small 'e.' Correct: *email*. When typing out an email address always put it in italics. Correct: *pgkerrigan@viterbo.edu*

Emeritus, emeriti: The formal title of certain retiring faculty members who have retained their rank. Emeritus should be used after the formal title. Example: *Professor Emeritus Tim Crane*. Emeriti is the plural form.

Founder's Day: Written with an apostrophe before the 's'.

Freshman/Freshmen: Freshman is the singular noun: *Betty is a freshman at Yale*. Freshmen is the plural: *Patty and John are freshmen at Viterbo*. But the adjective is always singular: *Sally had an interesting freshman seminar on Romanesque architecture at Stanford*.

FSPA: Periods are not needed when using the acronym for the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. See **Religious titles** for more information. Note: FSPA is already plural so there is no need to add an 's' to it.

Full time/Full-time and Part time/Part-time: Hyphenate when used as a compound modifier: *She works part time. She has a part-time job.*

Fundraising: Use fundraising and fundraiser as one word.

Hometowns: Generally, in news releases and in articles where it's applicable, we include a student's hometown. For example: *Jack Jones, from Gotham, placed first in the competition.* There is no need to note the state if the city is located in Wisconsin. Only use the state name when the city is not located in Wisconsin: *Shirley Smith, from Springfield, Ill., graduated with honors.* However, you may use the state name if you are clarifying a city name that also exists in Minnesota or Iowa: *Osseo, Wis.* or *Osseo, Minn.*

There is no need to use a state name with major metropolitan cities like Chicago, Minneapolis, Miami, Los Angeles, New York, etc.

Honorary degrees: All references to honorary degrees should specify that the degree was honorary: *Fr. J. Thomas Finucan received the Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters last year.* Or, *Fr. J. Thomas Finucan received an honorary degree last year.* Do not use Dr. before the name of an individual whose only doctorate is honorary.

Identity statement: "Founded and sponsored by the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, Viterbo is a Catholic, Franciscan University in the liberal arts tradition."

I.e.,: This is the abbreviation for the Latin words *id est*, meaning "that is." Always use a comma after it. Example: *She was placed on penicillin, i.e., an antibiotic, for an ear infection.*

Inservice: One word, no hyphen.

Internet: Capitalize the word.

La Croix: Space between the "La" and "Croix," *Sr. Marie Leon La Croix.*

La Crosse: When referring to our city, always put a space between "La" and "Crosse."

Lists: When typing copy that includes brief, bulleted lists, do not capitalize the first letter of the item in the list and do not use punctuation at the end of each item if they are incomplete sentences. Example: *I took the following items with me to class today:*

- *textbook*
- *laptop*
- *pen*
- *paper*

When each item in a bulleted list is a complete sentence, capitalize the first word and use a period at the end of the sentence. Example: *We were required to do the following to complete our course on Shakespeare:*

- *Read seven plays and 20 sonnets.*
- *Keep a journal recording our reactions to everything we read.*
- *Write a 20-page report comparing themes in at least two plays.*

Logos: See the communications and marketing Web site for specific instructions on appropriate use of the Viterbo University logo and seal.

Majors: Do not capitalize the name of a major unless it is a proper noun: *Brenda Smith majored in nursing. Jack Jones is an English major.*

Mission Statement: “The Viterbo University community prepares students for faithful service and ethical leadership.”

Months and year: Spell out the name of each month when used alone or with a year alongside (do not separate the month and year with a comma).

When a month is used in conjunction with a date, abbreviate the following months **Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov.,** and **Dec.** Examples: *There was a flood in April 2001. Jan. 1 is New Year’s Day. Independence Day is July 4. Aug. 28, 2006 is the start of the fall semester.*

In table format, use the following abbreviations without a period: *Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec.*

When using the year with the month do not use the word “of” between the month and year. Wrong: *April of 2003.* Correct: *April 2003.*

Dates that occur within the same month should be separated with an en dash rather than “from-to.” Wrong: *The conference is from July 22 to July 30.* Correct: *The conference in Chicago is July 22–30.*

MugShots: One word, capital *M* and *S*.

Numerals: In general, use Arabic forms (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.) unless denoting the sequence of wars or establishing a personal sequence for people or animals (i.e. *WWII, Richard III*). In text, the numbers 1–9 should be typed: *Sally took seven courses last fall.* Numbers from 10 and above should be written numerically: *Frank has a total of 68 credits.*

Office: Capitalize office when it is part of a formal name: *Office of the President, Office of Admission, etc.* Lowercase all other uses, including phrases such as: *The offices in Murphy Center. The director’s office is on first floor.*

Online: One word, no hyphen.

Outdoor Athletics Complex: Use an “s” on Athletics; do not use Outdoor Sports Complex.

Pax et Bonum: This is the correct spelling of the phrase which means *Peace and all good.*

Percent: This word should be written out in all contexts except in columns or tables when the symbol % may be used. The word *percent* takes a singular verb alone or when a singular word follows an “of” sentence construction: *Sue got a 95 percent on the test. The teacher said 80 percent of the students were in attendance.*

A plural verb is needed when a plural word follows the “of” sentence structure. *He said 50 percent of the students want to write in their journals weekly.*

Period spacing: Place only one space after a period and between sentences. However, do not put a space between initials or acronyms/abbreviations: *T.S. Eliot, Ph.D., M.D.* When using a period with quotation marks, the period always is placed inside the quotes: *She said, "That was a hard test."*

Plays: See **Composition titles**.

Pounds: Always write out pounds (*He weighed 180 pounds.*) and only use *lbs.* in tabular form.

President: When referring to the Viterbo University President, the preferred method is *Dr. Richard B. Artman, Viterbo University president.* You may also use *Viterbo University President Richard B. Artman.* See **Titles** for more information.

Punctuation:

Accent mark: To type an accent mark over a letter as in *Jesús Jambrina*, press "Option 'e' and then type the letter that gets the accent mark over it.

Apostrophe: Use an apostrophe when letters or figures are omitted: *rock 'n' roll, 'tis the season, the class of '62, the Spirit of '76, the 20s.* Years: use an s without an apostrophe to indicate spans of decades or centuries: *the 1890s, the 1800s.*

Colon: Use only one space after a colon.

Comma: Always use a comma in a series of three or more, i.e. *balls, bats, and mitts.*

Dashes: There are a variety of different dashes that can be used in punctuating a sentence. Each has its own distinct name and use. They are:

- **Em dash:** Typing "option" plus "shift" plus "hyphen" (—) will give you an em dash which is used in place of commas (within sentences) on occasion for additional emphasis. Example: *What a terrible thing to have lost one's mind—or not to have a mind at all.*
- **En dash:** Typing "option" plus "hyphen" (–) represents "to" between figures and words. Wrong: *Aug. 3-4, 2006.* Correct: *Aug. 3–4, 2006.* It is smaller than an em dash. The en dash is used between two numbers (i.e. times, dates, scores, ages).

Hyphen: Use a standard hyphen to connect words that serve as modifiers. Example: *We are a PC-driven office.*

Quotation marks: The period and comma always go inside the quotation marks. Example: *She said, "I have microbiology class tomorrow."* The dash, semicolon, question mark, and exclamation point go inside quotation marks only when they apply to the quoted matter. Example: *"Excellent!" he shouted.* They go outside when they apply to the whole sentence. *My roommate thinks my new computer is "very cool!"* For quotes within a quote, use single marks within double marks. Example: *The professor said, "Read the article, 'Holistic Care,' for class tomorrow."* Use quotation marks for titles of presentations. Example: *Stephanie Genz presented "Public Health Nursing Advocacy: Practice and Teaching" at the Wisconsin Public Health Nursing Conference in Madison.*

Semicolon: Use the semicolon to clarify a series. Example: *Our new faculty includes John Doe, sociology; Jane Smith, English; and Vern Lewis, biology.* Link independent clauses (clauses which could stand alone as sentences) with a semicolon. Example: *My thesis was due last week; I turned it in today.*

Parenthesis: Place periods outside of a closing parenthesis if the material inside is not a sentence (*such as this fragment*). (*An independent parenthetical sentence such as this one takes a period before the closing parenthesis.*)

Quotes: When including direct quotations in a story, use the past tense *said* for attribution: *He said, "I can't wait until graduation."*

Religious titles: For FSPA nuns, place the religious order initials behind the last name on the first reference: *Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA*. On second reference, omit the first name and place *Sr.* before the last name: *Sr. Weisenbeck*.

For priests, and other orders of nuns refer to the person by first and last name with *Rev.* or *Sr.* preceding the first name on first reference: *Rev. Thomas O'Neill*, or *Sr. Ann Smith*. On second reference, use the abbreviation for Father and omit the first name: *Fr. O'Neill* or *Sr. Smith*.

In both cases, you may use the less formal address of *Sr. Marlene* or *Fr. Tom* for internal audiences.

Rooms: Capitalize the names of specifically designated rooms or when used in conjunction with the name of a building: *the Hospitality Suite*, *the La Croix Black Box Theatre*, *the Marian Hall Dining Room*, *the Reinhart Center Board Room*.

For external audiences when referring to a classroom or other room on campus, reference the full building name and room number: *We'll meet in Murphy Center room 228*.

For internal audiences, you may abbreviate the building when referencing the room: *The staff meeting will be held in MC 228*.

School colors: The Viterbo University official school colors are cardinal (PMS 208) and silver (Cool Gray #6).

Servant Leadership: Lowercase when referring to the major. Do not use a hyphen.

States: Spell out the names of the 50 U.S. states when they stand alone. Eight states are never abbreviated: Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas, and Utah. Use the following abbreviations when in conjunction with the name of a city, town, village, or military base in the box below.

Ala.	Conn.	Ind.	Mass.	Mont.	N.M.	Ore.	Tenn.	Wis.
Ariz.	Del.	Kan.	Mich.	Neb.	N.Y.	Pa.	Vt.	Wyo.
Ark.	Fla.	Ky.	Minn.	Nev.	N.C.	R.I.	Va.	
Calif.	Ga.	La.	Miss.	N.H.	N.D.	S.C.	Wash.	
Colo.	Ill.	Md.	Mo.	N.J.	Okla.	S.D.	W.Va.	

For addresses, however, use the postal abbreviations. See **Address** listing.

There is no need to note the state if the city is located in Wisconsin. Only use the state name when the city is not located in Wisconsin: *Shirley Smith, from Springfield, Ill., graduated with honors*. However, you may use the state name if you are clarifying a city name that also exists in Minnesota or Iowa: *Osseo, Wis.* or *Osseo, Minn.*

There is no need to use a state name with major metropolitan cities like Chicago, Minneapolis, Miami, Los Angeles, New York, etc.

Strides: Viterbo University's alumni magazine title should be capitalized and italicized when referenced.

Telephone numbers: Use 608-222-2222 as the format for off-campus phone numbers or when printing Viterbo phone numbers for an off-campus audience. Use *ext. 2222* as the format for on-campus phone numbers as published for an on-campus audience.

Theatre: In all Viterbo University references to "theatre," the word should be spelled as "theatre" and not "theater." The only exception is for proper names, e.g. *Dream Theater*.

Times: Use figures except for *noon* and *midnight*. Use a colon to separate hours from minutes. Always use lowercase and punctuation for "a.m." and "p.m." Do not use zeros for times. Examples: *11 a.m., 1 p.m., 3:30 p.m.*

Avoid such redundancies as 10 a.m. this morning, 10 p.m. Monday night, and 12 p.m. noon. Use *10 a.m. today, 10 p.m. Monday, noon, etc.*

Titles: Capitalize and spell out formal titles such as professor, chair, president, dean, etc., when they precede a name: *President Richard B. Artman, Ph.D.* Lowercase elsewhere: *The dean issued the final schedule for the year.* Or *Richard B. Artman, president, said this academic year was a success.*

Lowercase titles that are strictly occupational, such as, *history professor Michael Smuksta.*

University: See ***College and university names.***

V-Hawks: The V-Hawks is the nickname for the athletics teams at Viterbo University. V-Hawks is always spelled with a hyphen.

Vic V-Hawk: The official trademark mascot of the Viterbo athletics department.

Vision Statement: "The University of Opportunity envisions Viterbo as a premier university that is innovative, creative, and flexible as well as progressive, collaborative, and ever-evolving that has as its foundation deeply embedded Franciscan values."

Web page: Spelled with a capital W, a space between words, and a lowercase 'p.'

Web site: Spelled with a capital W, a space between words, and a lowercase 's.' Italic Web site addresses. Example: *www.viterbo.edu*

Years: See ***Apostrophe under Punctuation*** for when to use an apostrophe in years.