



## TRAIL EDITORIAL STYLE GUIDE

### Abbreviations and acronyms

- Abbreviations and acronyms need not use periods (e.g., TRAIL, UI). Note that as an acronym and our official name, TRAIL must *always* appear in all caps.
- Use postal abbreviations for states, i.e., IA instead of Ia.

### Addresses

- In text or correspondence, spell out such words as road and street when they are part of a numbered address, e.g., 123 South Linn Street.
- Use commas to separate the street address, city, and state in an address: 1100 Scott Boulevard, Iowa City, IA 52245.
- However, when adding addresses to the ClubExpress or Kindful databases, use the preferred USPS style, with standard abbreviations (St, Blvd, Ct, NW, etc.) and no periods.

### Capitalization

- Capitalize a person's title only when it precedes the name (e.g., Executive Director Jane Doe). When the title follows the name or is used in another context, it should not be capitalized (e.g., "Jane is the executive director of our organization").
- Titles and headlines should be written "down style"—that is, only the first word is capitalized. Example: "Public events planned for next month."
- Board of Directors is capped, as is Board on second reference. Same applies to committee names; e.g., Volunteer Committee, ". . . the Committee decided . . ."

### Commas

- Use the serial comma (placing a comma before "and") in lists of people, places, and/or things.
- Use a comma after the year in all date references. Example: "Our next conference takes place on Wednesday, April 23, 2025, in Coralville."

### Dictionaries

- For spelling, style, and usage questions not covered in the AP Stylebook or this document, consult Webster's New World College Dictionary.

### Hyphenation

- Avoid hyphenation at the end of lines as much as possible. But if space is critical, hyphenation can be used in a limited way.

## Membership in TRAIL

- TRAIL memberships are expressed as Full memberships, Affiliate memberships, or Supported memberships (note capital letters). Similarly, when describing individuals, use Full member, Affiliate member, and Supported member, with the same capitalization.

## Numerals

- Write out the numbers one through nine; use numerals for 10 and greater.
- When referring to a range of numbers, use the word to rather than a hyphen: “We expect 25 to 30 surveys to be returned.”
- Use this format for telephone numbers: 319-800-9003 (do not place the area code in parentheses).

## Online references

- Use the format [www.trailofjohnsoncounty.org](http://www.trailofjohnsoncounty.org) to refer to URLs, unless www is not part of the address. It is not necessary to use http:// as part of the URL.

## Spacing

- Leave one space after the period at the end of a sentence, rather than two.

## Time of day

- Express as “2:30 PM” or to express the duration of an event, use the word to (“2:30 to 3:30 PM”) rather than hyphenating it (“2:30—3:30 PM”).
- Use “noon” and “midnight,” not 12 noon, 12 midnight, 12 AM, or 12 PM.

## Titles and italicization

- When possible, book titles (e.g., *War and Peace*), the titles of newspapers and magazines (the *Iowa City Press-Citizen*, *Prevention*), television shows (*Breaking Bad*), and movies (*Star Wars*) should be italicized. If citing an article in a magazine, put the article name in quotation marks. In some cases (e.g., social media posts), italics may not be an option; in those cases, place titles in quotation marks.
- TRAIL event titles (e.g., “The Silver Screen: Aging through the Eyes of Popular Cinema”) and speaker presentations should be placed in quotation marks. In some situations (e.g., print or online ads), it may be appropriate for event titles to appear in boldface instead.

## Typography and design

- Most TRAIL communications are aimed at older adults, many of whom experience some vision loss as they age. To ensure TRAIL’s print and online communications are as readable as possible, always use font sizes of 12 points or larger. Sans-serif fonts are preferable. Avoid the use of italics in text. Make sure there is a high degree of contrast between the background color and the text; i.e., avoid dark backgrounds with dark text.
- Additional resources: <https://craftandcommunicate.com/blog/2021/11/08/design-standards-seniors-print-digital-media/> and <https://sharpenet.com/give-take/guidelines-for-senior-friendly-marketing/>

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