



Mid-Atlantic Archivist
Style Guide

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Chicago Manual of Style

The *Mid-Atlantic Archivist* (MAA) generally utilizes Chicago style. If you are unsure about a style or format not identified in this guide, defer to [The Chicago Manual of Style Guide](#) (CMOS).

While not required for all articles, MAA uses Chicago's [Notes and Bibliography \(NB\)](#) system for documentation, which is preferred for humanities.

Writing Goals and Principles

MAA content is:

- Related to the archival and library field
- Respectful of the diverse community
- Submissions are open and available to all members and non-members, but with particular attention to the region (*Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia, and in the District of Columbia*)

Voice and Tone

The MAA's voice is:

- Professional
- Familiar
- Friendly
- Our tone changes depending on the topic, but it's generally informal-professional.

Our priorities are to inform our readers, both MARAC members and the wider archival community, about our field, enabling a conversation to support and share our experiences and expertise, as well as opportunities and information.

Submission Guidelines

The MAA has basic guidelines for submissions. Content can be flexible at the discretion of the editorial team.

Most submissions will be considered either Feature Articles or Caucus News. If a submission does not fit into either of these categories, please contact the Editor. Other material, such as Calls for Nominations or From the Chair columns will be solicited directly by the Editor.

When submitting an item for the MAA, ensure that links are working properly. Be sure to double check names, titles, exhibitions, etc. prior to submission. Leave only a single space between sentences.

Feature Articles (2-3 pages):

- 750-1250 words
- Word document or PDF
- Include 3-5 images, including captions (see [Images](#) for caption information)
 - Images must be JPEG, TIFF, or PDF and be 300 dpi or higher
 - Images must be in the public domain or used with express permission of the copyright holder (see [Copyright](#))
- Submit to the [current Editor and/or Associate Editor](#)
- If necessary, use Chicago Notes and Bibliography style for [citations](#)

Caucus News:

- Typically 50-250 words
 - News exceeding 500 words should be considered Feature Articles
- May include images
 - If images are included, they should follow the specifications above
- Submit to the appropriate [Caucus Representative](#)

Citations

Where required, MAA follows Chicago's [Notes and Bibliography](#) style for citations.

Notes are in-text citations where the first reference is a full citation and any recurrence is abbreviated. Bibliography refers to citations at the end of the article.

For assistance, refer to the [CMOS](#) or the [Purdue Owl](#).

Images

Images should be saved as TIFF, JPEGS, or PDFs. Resolution should be 300 dpi or higher.

Captions for Images from Online Collections:

Some repositories have distinct directions for captions and citations. When these exist, please defer to those instructions.

If captions and citations do not exist, please follow the format:

Title. Creator, date. Format. Collection Name, Repository, identifier as available and/or link to record or finding aid if identifier is unavailable.

Examples:

Standard Oil truck drawn by horses in winter, Morriston, NJ, 1920 February 9. Photograph. North Jersey History and Genealogy Center, MCTY202.

Candy seller, San Antonio, Texas. Alan Lomax, between 1934 and 1950. Photograph. Lomax collection, Prints & Photographs Division, Library of Congress, LC-DIG-ppmsc-00280. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2007660006/>.

Captions for Images From Members:

Name and/or description, date. Photograph courtesy of Name.

Example:

Jacob Hopkins, 2020-2021 MARAC Graduate School Archival Scholarship Recipient. Image courtesy of Jacob Hopkins.

Copyright

Contributors are responsible for ensuring that content submitted to the MAA is either in the public domain or has the appropriate permissions from copyright holders to republish. For more information refer to the [Copyright Law of the United States](#).

Grammar and Mechanics

The MAA broadly follows the specifications of the [CMOS](#). Some of the most common errors are listed below.

Capitalization in Titles, URLs and Websites

The choice of italics or quotation marks for a title of a work cited in text or notes is determined by the type of work. Titles of books and periodicals are italicized (see [8.168](#)); titles of articles, chapters, and other shorter works are set in roman and enclosed in quotation marks (see [8.177](#)).

Titles of world's fairs and other large-scale exhibitions and fairs are capitalized but not italicized. Smaller exhibitions (e.g., at museums) and the titles of exhibition catalogs (often one and the same) are italicized.

For treatment of book series and editions, see [8.176](#); for poems and plays, see [8.181–84](#); for fairy tales and nursery rhymes, see [8.185](#); for pamphlets and forms, see [8.186–87](#); for unpublished works, see [8.188](#); for movies, television, radio, and podcasts, see [8.189](#); for video games, see [8.190](#); for websites and blogs, see [8.191–92](#); for musical works, see [8.193–97](#); for works of art and exhibitions, see [8.198–201](#). For titles from other languages, see [11.6–10](#).

Titles of movies (or films) and movie series and of television, radio, and podcast programs and series are italicized. A single episode in a television, radio, or podcast series is set in roman and enclosed in quotation marks.

Titles of named blogs (and video blogs), like the titles of journals and other periodicals, can usually be italicized. An initial “the” can be treated as part of the title (an exception may be made for news blogs whose titles are styled like those of newspapers). Titles of blog posts should be placed in quotation marks (untitled posts should be referred to by date).

Capitalize the names of websites and web publications. Don’t italicize.

Titles of websites mentioned or cited in text or notes are normally set in roman, headline-style, without quotation marks.

An initial *The* should be lowercase except at the beginning of a sentence. Titled sections, pages, or special features on a website should be placed in quotation marks.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

If the reader might not recognize an abbreviation or acronym, spell it out the first time you use it, followed by the short version for all other references. If the abbreviation isn’t clearly related to the full version, specify in parentheses after the first use.

First use: *Mid-Atlantic Archivist*

Second use: MAA

First use: University of Maryland

Second use: UMD

Active voice

Use active voice and avoid passive voice when possible.

Voice shows whether the subject acts (active voice) or is acted on (passive voice)—that is, whether the subject performs or receives the action of the verb. In active voice, the subject of the sentence does the action. In passive voice, the subject of the sentence has the action done to it.

Numbers

Spell out a number at the beginning of a sentence ([9.5](#)). If the number is less than 10, spell it out, otherwise use numerals ([9.3](#), [house preference](#)).

Spell out fractions.

Use one-fifth and not 1/5.

Percentages

Use the % symbol instead of spelling out "percent."

Ranges and spans

Use a hyphen (-) to indicate a range or span of numbers.

Example: It takes 2-3 weeks.

Times and Dates

Numerals are used when exact times are emphasized. Chicago recommends lowercase a.m. (ante meridiem) and p.m. (post meridiem), though these sometimes appear in small capitals, with or without periods. (Note that the abbreviations a.m. and p.m. should not be used with morning, afternoon, evening, night, or o'clock.)

Examples: The first train leaves at 5:22 a.m. and the last at 11:00 p.m.

She caught the 6:20 p.m. flight.

Please attend a meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on December 5 at 10:30 a.m. (EST).

Her day begins at five o'clock in the morning.

Decades are either expressed in numerals or spelled out (as long as the century is clear) and lowercase. Chicago calls for no apostrophe to appear between the year and the s.

Note that the first decade of any century cannot be treated in the same way as other decades. "The 2000s," for example, could easily be taken to refer to the whole of the twenty-first century. To refer to the second decade (i.e., without writing "second decade"), prefer numerals (e.g., 1910s); the expression "the teens" should be avoided, at least in formal contexts.

the first decade of the twenty-first century (or the years 2000–2009)

the second decade of the twenty-first century or the 2010s (or the years 2010–19)

Note that some consider the first decade of, for example, the twenty-first century to consist of the years 2001–10; the second, 2011–20; and so on. Chicago defers to the preference of its authors in this matter.

Generally, spell out the day of the week and the month. *Wednesday, June 21, 1972*

Apostrophes

The possessive of most singular nouns is formed by adding an apostrophe and an s. The possessive of plural nouns (except for a few irregular plurals, like children, that do not end in s) is formed by adding an apostrophe only. For the few exceptions to these principles, see [7.20–22](#). See also [5.20](#).

Examples: the horse's mouth

a bass's stripes

puppies' paws

children's literature

a herd of sheep's mysterious disappearance

Commas

Items in a series are normally separated by commas (but see [6.60](#)). When a conjunction joins the last two elements in a series of three or more, a comma—known as the serial or series

comma or the Oxford comma—should appear before the conjunction. Chicago strongly recommends this widely practiced usage, blessed by Fowler and other authorities (see [bibliog. 1.2](#)), since it prevents ambiguity.

Examples: She posted pictures of her parents, the president, and the vice president.

Before heading out the door, he took note of the typical outlines of sweet gum, ginkgo, and elm leaves.

Dashes and hyphens

Use a hyphen (-) without spaces on either side to link words into a single phrase, or to indicate a span or range.

Examples: first-time user

Monday-Friday

Use an em dash (—) without spaces on either side to offset an aside.

Use a true em dash, not hyphens (- or --).

Example: Preservation testing—just one of our services—can help you determine the best next-steps in your processing timeline.

Missy thought Carolyn wrote the email, but she was wrong—it was Lara.

Ellipses

Ellipses (...) can be used to indicate that you're trailing off before the end of a thought. Use them sparingly. Don't use them for emphasis or drama, and don't use them in titles or headers.

Periods, Question Marks, and Exclamation Points

Periods go inside quotation marks. They go outside parentheses when the parenthetical is part of a larger sentence, and inside parentheses when the parenthetical stands alone.

Question marks go inside quotation marks if they're part of the quote. Like periods, they go outside parentheses when the parenthetical is part of a larger sentence, and inside parentheses when the parenthetical stands alone.

Exclamation points go inside quotation marks. Like periods and question marks, they go outside parentheses when the parenthetical is part of a larger sentence, and inside parentheses when the parenthetical stands alone.

Examples: Missy asked, "Did you eat pizza?"

I ate pasta (and I ate a garlic knot, too)!

Carolyn ate soup and a grilled cheese sandwich. (The sandwich was Lara's.)

Use single quotation marks for quotes within quotes.

Use quotes to refer to words and letters, titles of short works (like articles and poems), and direct quotations. (see *capitalization section below*)

Ampersands

Don't use ampersands unless one is part of a company or brand name.

Pronouns

If your subject's gender is unknown or irrelevant, use "they," "them," and "their" as a singular pronoun. Use "he/him/his" and "she/her/her" pronouns as appropriate. Don't use "one" as a pronoun.

Bias-Free Language

MAA seeks to create a bias-free publication. Part of this is using inclusive language. Refer to the [American Psychological Association](#) for additional examples of bias-free language.

Use terminology that is preferred by the individuals/communities being addressed.

The term Black (capitalized) should be utilized instead of African American ([8.38. house preference](#)).

The term "Native American" should be utilized over "Indian." However, when possible refer to individual tribes or groups over blanket generalizations.

Names, Schools, and Titles

The first time you mention a person in writing, refer to them by their first and last names. On all other mentions, refer to them by their first name.

Capitalize the names of departments and teams (but not the word "team" or "department").

Capitalize individual job titles when referencing a specific role. Don't capitalize when referring to the role in general terms.

The first time you mention a school, college, or university in a piece of writing, refer to it by its full official name. On all other mentions, use its more common abbreviation.

States, cities, and countries

Traditional state abbreviations should be used rather than postal abbreviations.

Example: Pittsburgh, Pa. not Pittsburgh, PA

For states with two words, there is a period after each letter.

Example: Newark, N.J. ([10.27](#))

When following the name of a city, the names of states, provinces, and territories are enclosed in commas, whether they are spelled out (as in running text) or abbreviated (as in tabular matter

or lists). In an exception to the rule, no comma appears between the postal code and a zip code.

Example: Bedford, Pa., and Jamestown, N.Y.

but

Send the package to J. Sprocket, 3359 Fob Dr., Quartz, Il. 60000.

Abbreviations for academic degrees

Abbreviations for academic degrees should be utilized wherever possible. If necessary, spelled-out terms should be lowercase in normal prose.

Example: He earned his PhD at Penn State University.

Lara S., MLIS