

American Literature Style Guide

American Literature (AL) adheres first to rules in this style guide. For issues not covered in the guide, please refer to AL's main references, The Chicago Manual of Style, 15th ed. (CMS); Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed. (W11); and Webster's Third New International Dictionary (W3I).

Abbreviations

Avoid abbreviations in the text, including etc. Instead of Latin abbreviations such as e.g. and i.e., use their English translations. (See the section "Documentation" for information on abbreviations in citations.)

Personal initials have periods and are spaced: W. E. B. DuBois; C. D. Wright

Acknowledgments

Acknowledgments are made in the first person and appear as a first unnumbered note in the endnote section.

Capitalization

Terms. AL generally prefers a down (lowercase) style. For detailed guidelines on capitalization of terms, see CMS, chap. 8.

modernism, imagism, romanticism, transcendentalism, gothic fiction, mugwumps

BUT

New Criticism, Democratic Party, the Left, the radical Right, the Cold War

Titles: Capitalize all words except articles (a, an, the), coordinating conjunctions (and, but, or, for, nor, yet, so), prepositions (unless they are the first or last word of the title or subtitle), and the words to and as. (Note that subordinating conjunctions other than as are capitalized [if, because, that, etc.]. Quoted phrases within the title are capitalized in the same manner as the rest of the title.

After a Colon: The first word following a colon begins with a lowercase letter, unless (1) the material introduced by a colon consists of more than one sentence, or (2) it is a quoted statement [CMS, 6.63–6.69].

"I would go even further: even if one had a good understanding of foreign languages, a successful translation of a work into one's own language would provide a more familiar and intimate pleasure than the original."

Quotations: AL follows conservative scholarly practice in indicating all changes in

capitalization with brackets. Capitalization in quoted phrases, sentences, and extracts should be made to fit the syntax of the surrounding sentences.

Benjamin Franklin admonishes us to “[p]lough deep while sluggards sleep.”

The spirit of our American radicalism is destructive. . . . [T]he conservative party. . . .

Contributors Notes

AL does not include contributors’ notes. Each author’s affiliation is printed at the end of the essay.

Dates and Times

8 February 1996

June 1863

fall 1992

8:15 a.m.

10–14 June 1863

from May to June 1863

the early nineteenth century; early-nineteenth-century fiction

late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century fiction

c. 1860 (**not** ca.)

from 1957 to 1967

1896–1900; 1863–65; 1906–9 BUT from 1896 to 1900

the 1850s; the 1920s; the eighties, the fifties (not the ’20s)

AD 873; 640 BC (full caps, no periods)

September 11

9/11

Documentation

General Principles

Endnotes are used; there is no bibliography. The first citation of a work provides full bibliographic information; subsequent citations provide the author’s last name, a shortened title, and the page number. For sources cited over three times, an abbreviation is designated in the first endnote, and parenthetical citations in the text are used thereafter.

Slotkin, Gunfighter Nation, 20.

Further references to Moby-Dick are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text as MD.

Abbreviations and Latin Terms in Documentation

AL does not use the following Latin abbreviations and words in its documentation: loc. cit., op. cit., infra, supra, idem, f., ff., and passim.

Ibid. is set in roman type; *sic* is italicized.

Online sources

An access date is required only if no publication date is provided. In online citations, http:// does not precede URLs.

If the online source is also in paper format (such as a book), include full citations for both the online and the paper forms.

Titles of works, ampersands and numbers are spelled out (20th Century becomes Twentieth Century).

Publishing Information

University is shortened to “Univ.” (Duke Univ. Press).

Journal Article: AL identifies the specific issue of a journal by using the month or season rather than the issue number. **Note that the season is not capitalized.**

Ann B. Dalton, “‘This Is Obscene’: Female Voyeurism, Sexual Abuse, and Maternal Power in The Dove,” Review of Contemporary Fiction 33 (fall 1993): 118.

Leigh Gilmore, “Obscenity, Modernity, Identity: Legalizing The Well of Loneliness and Nightwood,” Journal of the History of Sexuality 4 (April 1994): 603–24.

In rare cases when there is no month or season, we do include the issue number with the volume number:

Edgar Lee Hewett, “The Art of the Earliest Americans,” El Palacio 13, no. 1 (1922): 21.

Online Journal Article

Rabab Abdulhadi, “Where Is Home? Fragmented Lives, Border Crossings, and the Politics of Exile,” Radical History Review, no. 86 (2003): 89–101, muse.jhu.edu/journals/radical_history_review/v086/86.1abdulhadi.html.

Article in a Popular Magazine: Popular weekly or monthly magazines are cited by date only; page numbers are given and are separated from the date by a comma.

Thomas Wentworth Higginson, "Sappho," Atlantic Monthly, July 1871, 83.

Online Magazine Article: Peter Davis, "Ignited Iraq: Baghdad Journal," Nation, 28 August 2003, www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml?i=20030915&s=davis.

Article in a Newspaper: Because items may be moved or eliminated in various editions, page numbers are usually omitted. For items in a paper with several editions, the name of the edition is useful. References to newspapers published in sections usually include the name, number, or letter of the section.

Albert Finnonian, "The Iron Curtain Rises," Wilberton (Ohio) Journal, 7 February 1990, final edition.

Williams Robbins, "Big Wheels: The Rotary Club at 75," New York Times, Sunday, 17 February 1980, sec. 3.

Online Newspaper Article: Associated Press, "Jackson Arrested at Yale after Protest Backing Strike," 2 September 2003, www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A12012-2003Sep1.html.

Book, Single Author

Joseph A. Boone, Tradition Counter Tradition: Love and the Form of Fiction (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1987), 2.

Book, Multiauthor: With two or three authors, list authors in the order in which they appear on the title page. With more than three authors, in your first full citation list all authors in the order in which they appear on the title page; in subsequent citations, use the first author's name followed by et al.

Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1979), 214.

Gilbert and Gubar, Madwoman in the Attic, 220. (Subsequent citation)

Charlotte Marcus, Jerome Waterman, Thomas Gomez, and Elizabeth DeLor, Investigations into the Phenomenon of Limited-Field Criticism (Boston: Broadview, 1990), 200.

Marcus et al., Investigations, 203.

Online Book

Timothy D. Pyatt, ed., Guide to African American Documentary Resources in North Carolina (Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia Press, 1996), www.upress.virginia.edu/epub/pyatt/index.html.

PhD Dissertation

Andrew J. King, “Law and Land Use in Chicago: A Pre-History of Modern Zoning” (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, 1976), 32–37.

Essay in a Book

Henry Louis Gates Jr., “The Black Man’s Burden,” in Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory, ed. Michael Warner (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1993), 233. [**Note that the editor’s name is given after the title of the work.**]

Chapter in a Book

Rita Felski, Literature after Feminism (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2003), 23–56. [**AL does not include the chapter title or chapter number, only the inclusive page numbers.**]

Interview

Jay Vazquez, interview by the author, Fairfax County, Va., 20 February 1995.

Introduction or Preface

Deborah McDowell, introduction to Nella Larsen, “Quicksand” and “Passing,” ed. Deborah McDowell (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1986), ix–xxxv.

Multivolume Work: The total number of volumes is given; the volume being quoted is included in the page number:

Andrew Johnson, Presidential Messages and State Papers, ed. Julius W. Muller, 10 vols. (New York: Review of Reviews, 1917), 3:40.

When citing a volume with a different title than the title of the multivolume work, only that volume’s number is given, along with the volume’s title (and editor, if different from the general editor).

Michel Foucault, The Care of the Self, vol. 3 of The History of Sexuality, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1986), 221.

Herman Melville, Typee, A Peep at Polynesian Life, vol. 1 of The Writings of Herman Melville, ed. Harrison Hayford, Hershel Parker, and G. Thomas Tanselle (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern Univ. Press and the Newberry Library, 1968), 62.

Citing Notes

For unnumbered notes, the page number is followed by “n.”:

Bolinger, Language, 200 n.

For numbered notes, the page number is followed by “n.” and the note number:

Bolinger, Language, 200 n. 14.

For two notes, use the abbreviation “nn.”:

Bolinger, Language, 201 nn. 12, 17.

Bolinger, Language, 200 n. 16, 201 nn. 12, 17.

Paper Read at a Meeting

Eviatar Zerubavel, “The Benedictine Ethic and the Spirit of Scheduling” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Study of Civilizations, Milwaukee, Wis., April 1978), 17–19.

Reprints and Editions: For reprints, provide the publication date of the original (but not the publisher and place) followed by a full citation for the reprint edition you are using. For editions, specify which edition (“2nd ed.”) after the title. For more detailed guidance, see CMS 17.123.

Pauline Hopkins, Contending Forces: A Romance Illustrative of Negro Life North and South (1900; reprint, New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988), 28.

The Norton Anthology of American Literature, ed. Nina Baym et al., 4th ed. (New York: Norton, 1994).

NOTE: When a work of literature appears in the text of the essay, AL includes the first publication date in parentheses: The House of Mirth (1905).

Scholarly Edition

Herman Melville, Billy Budd, Sailor (An Inside Narrative), ed. Harrison Hayford and Merton Sealts Jr. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1962). (Original publication information is not necessary.)

The Papers of William Hinkling Prescott, ed. C. Harvey Gardiner (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1964), 196. [The editor is listed after the title, unless he or she is the one being quoted. The author of the works edited is not listed before the title if named in the title.]

Translation

Garcilaso de la Vega, el Inca, The Royal Commentaries of the Incas, and General History of Peru, trans. Harold V. Livermore, 2 vols. (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1966), 1:27.

It is useful to provide translations of titles in languages other than English; the translation follows the title and is enclosed in parentheses.

Henryk Wereszynski, Koniec sojuszu trzech cesarzy (The End of the Three Emperors' League) (Warsaw: PWN, 1977), 22.

Documenting a Quotation within a Note:

Elaine Marks writes that “Sappho and her island Lesbos are omnipresent in literature about women loving women, whatever the gender or sexual preference of the writer and whether or not Sappho and her island are explicitly named” (“Lesbian Intertextuality,” in Homosexualities and French Literature, ed. George Stambolian and Elaine Marks [Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1978], 356).

Web Sites (Other than online books and periodicals): Include as much of the following information as possible: author of the content, title of the page (if there is one), title or owner of the site, URL, and access date (if no publication date is provided). The official titles of Web sites are set in roman type, with headline-style capitalization.

Harry -, “Introduction,” The Gore Vidal Index,
www.pitt.edu/kloman/vidalframe.html (accessed 27 July 2003).

Southern Poverty Law Center, “Center Information,”
www.splcenter.org/centerinfo/ci-index.html (accessed 27 August 2003). [If there is no author, the owner of the site may stand in the author’s place.]

Ellipses (CMS 11.51–67)

Three dots indicate that material has been omitted within a sentence or fragment; a period plus three dots indicates material omitted between grammatically complete sentences (either one or more sentences, or the end of the last sentence).

In general, ellipses are not used at the beginning of a quotation (whether or not it begins with a grammatically complete sentence). They are not used at the end unless material is omitted from the last quoted sentence.

Original Passage: The spirit of our American radicalism is destructive and aimless; it is not loving, it has no ulterior and divine ends; but is destructive only out of hatred and selfishness. On the other side, the conservative party, composed of the most moderate, able, and cultivated part of the population, is timid, and merely defensive of property.

Ellipsis within a Sentence: The spirit of our American radicalism . . . is not loving . . . but is destructive only out of hatred and selfishness.

Ellipsis between Sentences: The spirit of our American radicalism is destructive and aimless. . . . On the other side, the conservative party . . . is timid, and merely defensive of property.

Ellipsis at the end of the last sentence: “[T]he conservative party . . . is timid. . . .”

Epigraphs

Epigraphs are set flush right, in roman type, without quotation marks (unless there is dialogue or a quotation within the epigraph). The attribution includes the author’s name and the title of the work, and may also include the date. No other bibliographical information is necessary. An em dash separates the end of the epigraph from the attribution.

Endnote citations are not used in epigraphs.

AL does not place epigraphs before sections of an essay.

Extracts

Dramatic dialogue, verse quotations over two lines long, and prose quotations of more than eighty words are set off from the surrounding text.

Illustrations (Figures) and Captions

See our guide “Preparing Illustrations and Captions for [American Literature](#).”

Inclusive Language

Always use bias-free and gender neutral language (avoid chairman, mankind, and the like).

For pronouns, do not use the following nonstandard forms: “he/she,” “s/he,” “(s)he.” Instead, use “he or she” or “she or he” or recast the sentence. Refer to Marilyn Schwartz’s Guidelines for Bias-Free Writing (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1995) for helpful suggestions for dealing with issues of gender, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, and age.

Numbers

Spell out cardinal and ordinal numbers up to 100, such numbers followed by hundred, thousand, or million, any number at the beginning of a sentence, and common fractions.

Thirty-two children from ten families were packed into three vans.
 Eight thousand trees, forty-seven thousand persons
 The three parking lots will provide space for 560 more cars
 one-fifth to an almost incredible one-half, two-thirds
 the 122nd and 123rd days of the strike
 three-hundred-odd articles

Numbers that express decimal quantities, dollar amounts, and percentages are written as figures.

80 percent
 15–20 percent of the citizen population
 more than \$56

Numbers applicable to the same category are treated alike in the same context.

between 51 and 211 people

Numbers, inclusive

If the first number is 100, less than 100, or a multiple of 100, use all digits in the second number.

1–54, 27–28, 98–135, 1–209, 100–103, 600–615, 1100–1123

If the first number is 101 through 109, in multiples of 100, use only the changed digits in the second number.

101–9, 305–23, 1004–8

If the first number is 110 through 199, in multiples of 100, use two or more digits as needed.

191–92, 191–241, 205–23, 351–60

In the pagination of front matter and indexes, roman numerals are always given in full.

xxv–xxvii, cvi–cix

Section Headings (Subheads)

AL allows two types of breaks in essays: (1) section breaks with subheads and (2) section breaks indicated by three filled-in squares (■ ■ ■). Subheads, always unnumbered, are set in boldface. The first paragraph after a subhead is not indented. A subhead is not permitted for the opening section.

Endnotes are not allowed in subheads.

If a subhead includes a quotation, the quotation must appear also in the body of the section, accompanied by a full citation. (Occasionally, it appears earlier in the essay instead.)

Spelling and Terms

For spelling, consult W11 and W31. To ensure consistency, when more than one spelling is acceptable, always use the first.

Common foreign terms (e.g., *ad hoc*, *mutatis mutandis*, *fin de siècle*, and *bon vivant*) are set in roman type. (A term is considered common if it has a main entry in W11.) Otherwise, foreign terms are set in italics the first time they appear and in roman type in subsequent appearances.

A term referred to as a term is italicized, not placed in quotation marks.

Perhaps the most overused term in recent monographs is hermeneutics (not “hermeneutics”).

Scare Quotes

AL avoids scare quotes whenever possible. In most cases, the author’s control of the context can and should convey how a word is being used.

Translation

Definitions of isolated foreign words or phrases are enclosed in parentheses following the

original. When it seems advisable to translate a lengthier passage within the text, the translation is placed in parentheses following the original. Quotation marks are used only for the original.

The word she used was not une poêle (frying pan) but un poêle (stove).

When an original non-English title and its translation appear together in the text, the first version (whether the original or the translation) takes the form of an original title, and the second version is always enclosed in parentheses and treated like a bona fide title (whether or not the work represents a published translation), with capitalization appropriate to the language.

I read *Mi nombre es Roberto* (*My Name Is Roberto*) in 1989.

I read *My Name Is Roberto* (*Mi nombre es Roberto*) in 1989.

Usage

U.S., American: AL prefers U.S. rather than American for political and historical contexts. For many literary contexts, U.S. is preferred.

U.S. policy, U.S. government, U.S. intervention, U.S. history
Nineteenth-century U.S. literature

African American, Black

AL uses African American for both the noun and the adjective. We never use black as a noun (a black, blacks) unless the context involves whites and blacks and there is no other reasonable phrasing (such as “white residents,” black citizens”) or the term includes people from countries other than the United States.

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