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## *HFC Editorial Style Guide*

July 2011

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The purpose of the *HFC Editorial Style Guide* provided by Harpers Ferry Center is to create a standard for writing and editing in our interpretive media and to answer recurring questions about grammar and editorial style. Commonly asked questions are addressed here, with emphasis on terms and phrases specific to National Park System areas.

Answers to style questions not addressed here can be found in standard style reference books, specifically: *Chicago Manual of Style, 15th Edition*; *United States Government Printing Office Style Manual, 2008*; *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk and E. B. White; and *The Associated Press Stylebook, 43rd edition, 2008*.

For decisions about spelling, hyphenation, and compound words, we recommend *The American Heritage Dictionary of The English Language, Fourth Edition*.

References often disagree—that is why style guides exist—and questions of style must be decided with the public foremost in mind. This is the audience for National Park Service public media, not scholars, historians, scientists, or bureaucrats. It is most important that the editorial style used throughout your publication, exhibit, web page, podcast, audiovisual production, or other media be consistent.

●● New entries are added to this guide at times. New or revised entries in this July 2011 edition are marked with two red bullets.

If you have comments or suggested revisions, send an email to <HFC Editorial Style Guide>. Your comments and questions are always welcome.

- ***a* or *an* when used before *h*** Use *a* before a pronounced *h*; use *an* before a silent *h*.

a historic moment	an honor
a hysterical patient	an heir
a hoary marmot	an honest mistake

- ***a* or *an*** Choosing *a* or *an* depends on the sound of the word it precedes—not how the word is spelled. Use *a* before words beginning with a consonant sound, including *y* and *w*, no matter how the word is spelled. Use *an* before words beginning with a vowel sound. *see* entry above; *see* NPS; *see* *Chicago Manual of Style, 15th Edition*.

an NPS regulation	a National Park Service regulation
an <i>X-File</i> episode	a historic site

- **abandoned** Avoid when writing about American Indian dwellings.

Ancestral Puebloan people left their homes in Chaco Canyon about 800 years ago.

- **access** Avoid as a verb for “reach” or “get to” (word is too similar to accessible).

You can get to Prince William Forest Park from the south via I-95.

- **accessible** Use this adjective when referring to facilities, trails, campsites, (and more) that can be used by people using wheelchairs. Do *not* use when giving directions. The word has other legitimate meanings, but try to adhere to the recommendation of this editorial style guide. *see* disabled; *see* hearing loss.

The national seashore has accessible shelters for waterfowl hunters in wheelchairs.

- **accessibility** Try to include a short accessibility paragraph in brochures and other media. Service animals are permitted in national parks by federal law, but check with the park first.

**Accessibility** Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center is wheelchair-accessible. Ask the park about other accessible facilities and activities. Service animals are welcome.

- **acronym** An acronym refers to a single, pronounceable word formed from the initial letters of a series of words from a name, title, or long term. North Atlantic Treaty Organization—NATO. Acquired immune deficiency syndrome—AIDS. *see* initialism; *see* NPS (when to use an article).

- **act of Congress/Act**

Adding these properties will require an act of Congress.  
*but* The Wilderness Act was signed into law in September 1964.

- **A.D.** Avoid. *see* dates.

- **addresses** Spell out street, road, way, and avenue in running text; abbreviate in a stacked address (each item on a separate line). For clarity, whenever possible, place address (and phone number) at end of paragraph. Write NW, SW, NE, SE *see* state names.

20120 Cypress Ave.  
The White House is on Pennsylvania Avenue.  
16th Street NW

- **administrative statement format** This may be shortened if necessary.

[North Cascades] is one of over 390 parks in the National Park System. To learn more about national parks and National Park Service programs in America's communities, visit [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov).  
To learn more about national parks, visit [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov).

- **African American (or black)** No hyphen. *see* enslaved/slave/slavery/slaveholder.  
  - African Americans traveled north on the Underground Railroad.
  - the African American soldier.
  
- **agencywide**
  
- **Air Force One** This name is used for any aircraft carrying the US president, including helicopters.
  
- **am** No periods, small letters (no capitals); style guides differ. *see* time of day.
  
- **America** A world-wide synonym for the United States of America; use American to describe the people.
  
- **America the Beautiful National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass** *see* National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass.
  
- **American Indian** Use specific tribal name(s) whenever possible, accurate, and appropriate. Use singular noun: Navajo, Lakota, Tlingit. Or use American Indian. Native American is ambiguous and least desirable of alternatives; *but* some tribes prefer Native American—use the preference of area groups. *see* First Nation.  
  - The Navajo entered Canyon de Chelly about 300 years ago.
  - The Anishinaabek fished in Lake Superior while en route to their summer fishing areas at the Sault rapids of the Saint Marys River.
  
- **American Revolution affiliations** Do *not* capitalize patriot, loyalist, regulars, or tory (except in quoted material). Do capitalize Whig and Tory as members of political parties; Continental Army troops; Provincial regiments; British Army. Experts disagree about capitalization of American Revolutionary War terms; use park staff's preference.
  
- **Anasazi** Avoid, or clarify at first mention, *but* use the preference of specific groups. *see* ancestral Puebloan people.  
  - These ancestral Puebloan people, often called Anasazi, used ladders made of ponderosa pine to reach the canyon's ledges.
  
- **ancestral Puebloan people** Predecessors of today's Pueblo and Hopi Indians; try to avoid Anasazi except at first mention.
  
- **Anglo** Traditionally it referred to white English-speaking Americans. In contemporary American usage, especially in the Southwest, it means anyone who is not Hispanic or Latino. *see* white/white settlers.  
  - Inspired by popular histories about Cortez's conquest of Mexico, and thinking that the Aztec built these structures, Anglo settlers named the place Aztec.
  
- **app** Lowercase unless part of a proper name like iTunes App Store. *see* iPhone, smartphone.  
  - Use the NPS National Mall app to learn about memorials in our Nation's Capital.
  
- **archeology** *not* archaeology.
  
- **arms (small)** Firearms that can be carried in the hand, like muskets, pistols, rifles, carbines, and shotguns. *see* artillery.

- **Army/army** Capitalize when referring to an official, organized group and if it is part of a proper name; lowercase if used as a generic term.

Geronimo resisted the US Army for 16 years.

Fearing that the Chiricahua Apache leader would escape again, the federal government ordered army scouts to stand 24-hour watch.

The Army of the Cumberland was one of the principal Union armies in the Western Theater in the Civil War.

- **artillery** Large-caliber weapons, like cannon, howitzers, and missile launchers, usually supported on a carriage and operated by crews.

*see arms (small).*

The Napoleon 12-pounder [not 12-pound] cannon was the most popular smooth-bore artillery piece in the Union and Confederate armies.

- **ATV** All-terrain vehicle; no need to spell out this commonly used initialism.

- **audiovisual**

- **backcountry**

- **bald cypress**

- **B.C.** Avoid. *see BCE/CE; see dates.*

- **BCE/CE** BCE (before common era) replaces B.C., and CE (common era) replaces A.D. Clarify at first mention. This format is preferred over B.C. and A.D.

At Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site the earliest known people date from 11,000 to 6,000 BCE (Before Common Era).

- **biannual/biennial** Biannual means twice a year (like semiannual). Biennial means every two years.

- **biological soil crust** This is the preferred term for what was formerly called cryptobiotic. For details visit: [www.soilcrust.org](http://www.soilcrust.org)

The biological soil crust at Arches National Park is alive, but it won't bite you.

- **birch bark** Two words if a noun; one word if an adjective.

You can see a birchbark storage basket at Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore.

Ojibwa taught French explorers how to build canoes from birch bark.

- **birder/birding/birdwatcher** *not* birdwatcher. Use birder for someone who likes to look at birds. Birdwatcher is sometimes considered a pejorative term for an excessive nature-lover. Use birding for the activity.

Gateway National Recreation Area is a popular spot for birding, especially during the spring and fall migrations.

- **bison** Commonly called buffalo. If writing bison, clarify at first mention.

Bison, commonly called buffalo, graze on this prairie.

- **black** *see African American.*

- **black-eyed Susan**

- **boat launch** Preferred over boat ramp (ramps are paved; boat launches include paved and unpaved entrances). Be consistent with park signage.

- **boundary/boundaries** A park may have one boundary or many boundaries; park acreage doesn't matter. A *boundary* encloses a single, contiguous area. *Boundaries* enclose park areas that are not connected to each other; they may be separated by towns, sea channels, even states.

In 1897 goldseekers rushed to the Pacific Northwest. Today you can trace their paths within the boundaries of Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Park. The California condor is just one of the endangered species that is protected within the park boundary.

- **ca.** Avoid writing “ca.” or “circa” in running text for publications, exhibits, and websites—rewrite or use “about,” *but* use abbreviation ca. in short caption or credit lines.

The pearlware bowl found at Ninety Six National Historic Site dates to about 1810. Clara Barton ca. 1856; photo by Mathew Brady (*left*). NPS

- **cactus, cacti**

- **campstove**

- **Canada goose** *not* Canadian goose.

- **cannon** Cannon can be both singular and plural (same word, no *s*). Cannons is correct but used less often. Be consistent; use local preference; *see* artillery.

Many of the fort's 18-, 24-, and 36-pounder cannon were the type used on ships.

- **capital, capitol** Spelled with an *a*—the city where a seat of government is located; do *not* capitalize. Spelled with an *o*—the building where the business of government takes place. Capitalize when referring to the US Capitol in Washington, DC, and when referring to state capitols.

Annapolis is the capital of Maryland.  
The Virginia Capitol is in Richmond.

- **capitalization** Avoid unnecessary capitals. Animal and plant names are lowercase unless they contain a proper name. Nouns are capitalized if part of a formal name, lowercase if they stand alone. If a term is plural following more than one proper name, it is lowercase (style guides differ). For Spanish words *see Chicago Manual of Style, 15th Edition*.

water from the Shenandoah and Potomac rivers  
emigrants on the Oregon and California trails

sea otter	Kentucky warbler
Douglas fir	great blue heron
New York City	<i>but</i> the city of New York
Acadia National Park	<i>but</i> the park policy
Wisconsin Ice Age	<i>but</i> during the ice age
Ranger Baker	<i>but</i> Ask a ranger.
Superintendent Walter	<i>but</i> The superintendent is here.
Apache Visitor Center	<i>but</i> at the visitor center
US government	<i>but</i> federal government

- **captions** Captions or labels (clauses or phrases) end with a period.

Major Ferguson addresses his troops before the battle.  
Colonel Shelby, three hours before the battle.  
Pinelands tree frog.

- century** Use actual dates instead of “century.” *not* the 16th-century fort. The 16th century refers to the 1500s and requires mental translation for many people.

On to California! Since the mid-1800s the West had held out the promise of gold and boundless opportunity.

*not* Since the mid-19th century the West had held out the promise . . .

- chief justice** Lowercase unless used before a proper name.

William Howard Taft, 27th US president, later became the 10th chief justice of the United States, the only person to have served in both offices.

- chronology or timeline format** Begin with initial cap and end with period—even if entry is a sentence fragment. Write in present tense.

1882 Born January 30, Hyde Park, New York.

1883 Organizes black student school strike, the first such response in the United States to unequal treatment.

- circa** Avoid. *see ca.*

- civil rights movement**

The Selma to Montgomery march in 1965 was a climactic event of the modern civil rights movement.

- Civil War** Confederates—members of the Confederate army. Federals—members of the Union army. The North—use sparingly in referring to the US government during the Civil War, use Union or Federal government. The South—use sparingly in referring to the 11 states that seceded; use Confederate States of America (formal name) or the Confederacy. Yankee—do *not* use as a synonym for Union soldiers; avoid except in quoted material.

Unionist—do *not* use as a synonym for Union soldiers; avoid except in quoted material. Rebel—do *not* use as a synonym for Confederate; avoid except in quoted material.

*see* federal, Confederate States of America, and CSA.

The 54th Massachusetts Infantry was one of the most famous of the Union’s black regiments.

- colon** Lowercase or capitalize the first word after a colon? A colon introduces something that is closely related to the sentence or topic preceding the colon. Do *not* capitalize if the colon is followed by a list. Do capitalize if the colon is followed by a **complete sentence**. (Use colons sparingly.)

Make bread with these ingredients: flour, water, salt, sugar, and yeast.

The president promised results: “My new program, the War on Poverty, will help low income families in America.”

- Cold War**

- commander in chief** No hyphens. Capitalize if part of a proper name.

- commas** In a series of three or more items, separate the items with commas. Use a comma before a conjunction that joins two independent clauses (and, but, or, as). Unless needed for clarity, omit comma after short introductory phrases.

Our dessert choices are pie, cake, and ice cream.

Alfred lost the car keys, and the family is helping him search every cranny.

Around him the rolling hills and woods of the battlefield sprawl for miles.

- compass directions** Lowercase; capitalize only specific geographic regions, but try to limit capitals. *see* east, north, south, west, geographic regions.

- **concessioner**
- **Confederate** *see* Civil War.
- **Confederate States of America, C.S.A.** Use C.S.A. sparingly to avoid ambiguity; it refers to the Confederate States of America—but it can refer to the Confederate States Army. *see* CSA.
- **Congressional Medal of Honor** *see* Medal of Honor.
- **convince that** *but* persuade to.
- **cougar** mountain lion; panther; puma.
- **credit lines and copyright symbol usage ©/brochures**  
*see below* credit lines and copyright symbol usage ©/wayside exhibits

*Note:* Copyright usage has precise, legal regulations. Always verify with source of the image about correct use of the copyright symbol ©.

Be aware of “work made for hire” situations found in the Copyright Act of 1976. Work made for hire is determined by the relationship between parties. Don’t assume anything; *see* US Copyright Office website at [www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov).

Format—credit line. Name of photographer, artist, or creator should be in all caps and small type size. Place credit so it is not mistaken as a caption or interpretive text.

1) GIVE CREDIT Name of creator of image and use the copyright symbol ©.

- Professional photographer, artist, or creator of image (someone who is paid by NPS only for the use of image—and original creator retains all property and all rights).

© JANE AUSTIN [credit next to photo]

- Stock house manages the image provided by photographer, artist, or creator of image (stock house is paid by NPS for the use of image—and stock house, as agent, may retain property and rights). Often stock house is listed first and photographer second; sometimes only stock house is credited; sometimes the photographer retains the copyright—credit according to use-right agreement.

*Note:* Always verify copyright owner.

© IMAGES FOR YOU / JACK SPRAT  
IMAGES FOR YOU / © JACK SPRAT

- Amateur photographer, artist, or creator of image (someone who donates use of the image to NPS but retains all property rights)—this includes park volunteers, professionals who are often called “friends of the park,” and NPS employees who created the image/product on their own time, with their own equipment, and with their own money (no reimbursement or other payment).

© BABE RUTH [for his baseball illustration]

2) GIVE CREDIT NPS and person’s name; use the copyright symbol ©.

- Photo or illustration is owned by NPS but photographer, artist, or creator retains copyright (requested in writing, approved, and granted). This *may* be considered a “work made for hire.”

NPS / © LOUIS S. GLANZMAN [for illustration British troops occupy Boston]

- 3) GIVE CREDIT NPS and person's name. Do *not* use copyright ©.
- Photo or illustration is commissioned by NPS, and NPS owns the finished product (photo, illustration) unconditionally with no restrictions. This *may* be considered a “work made for hire.”

NPS / L. KENNETH TOWNSEND [for Saint Gaudens illustration]

- NPS hires a professional to photograph or draw objects owned by NPS; (professional may be credited if requested). NPS owns the finished product (photo, illustration) unconditionally with no restrictions. This *may* be considered a “work made for hire.”

NPS / BETSY ROSS

- 4) CREDIT NPS ONLY Do *not* use copyright symbol ©.

- Photo, illustration, artifact is owned by the park or is part of NPS collection; this includes photo, illustration, other image, or product created by park employees while on duty.

NPS [for sketch of muskrat by park employee]  
NPS COLLECTION

- 5) INSTITUTIONS. Do *not* use copyright symbol ©.

- Historic photos, illustrations, images from museums, institutions, libraries, and more. *Note*: If artist or photographer is of historical importance, try to use the name in the caption—not in the credit.

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION [photo credit, gold nugget]  
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS [photo credit, wagon train]

Edward Curtis photographed these Navajo riding east into Canyon de Chelly in 1904. NATIONAL ARCHIVES [caption and credit for photograph]

- 6) CREDIT PERSON (owner of image/product). Do *not* use copyright symbol ©.

- Historic photo, illustration, image, artifact is privately owned but was not created or produced by the owner (person donates use of image to NPS, or is paid, but retains ownership and property rights).

COURTESY / BOB SLEDD [for use of historical postcards]  
COURTESY/ ART BRUSH [for photo of Navajo chief blanket]

- credit lines and copyright symbol usage ©/wayside exhibits  
Do *not* use credit lines or copyright symbols © on wayside exhibits unless the owner or photographer insists. If a credit line is required, follow the guidelines above.

- cross-country

- cryptobiotic crust *see* biological soil crust.

- CSA *CSA without* the periods has come to stand for Confederate States Army; it is most commonly used after a person's name.

Lt. Gen. John Bell Hood, CSA, had a reputation for bravery and aggressiveness that sometimes bordered on recklessness.

- dashes *see Chicago Manual of Style, 15th Edition* for a variety of uses.

- 1) Em dash—Longer than en dash or hyphen, often called simply “the dash.” It is used to indicate a sudden change in thought or to add emphasis. There is no space before or after the em dash.

Kings Mountain—named for an early settler and not for King George III—is a rocky spur of the Blue Ridge. (em dash)



2) En dash—Longer than a hyphen and shorter than an em dash. The primary use of the en dash is to connect related numbers like dates, times, and pages. This use of the en dash means “to, up to and including, or through.” There is no space before or after the en dash.

1924–2005

8 am–5 pm

pp. 38–45

*Note:* Watch parallel construction; don’t mix and match written words and the en dash.

If you mean “from . . . to,” do *not* use the en dash for the word “to.”

The visitor center is closed from October 15 to April 1.

The visitor center is closed October 15–April 1.

The bill passed the Senate by a vote of 71–29.

*not* The visitor center is closed from October 15–April 1.

If you mean “between . . . and,” do *not* use the en dash for the word “and.”

You may rent canoes between 9 am and 2 pm.

You may rent canoes 9 am–2 pm.

*not* You may rent canoes between 9 am–2 pm.

•• **dates** *see eras*

Write dates in this order: month, day, year. Use a comma before and after the year in sentences with full dates. No comma if using only month and year in a sentence. Do *not* use an apostrophe to indicate plural dates.

On December 7, 1941, Japanese bombers struck Pearl Harbor.

Five companies garrisoned Fort Sumter in June 1863.

1900s

*not* 1900’s

1950s and 1960s

*not* 1950’s and *not* ‘60’s

spirit of ‘76

Write BCE (before common era) and CE (common era).

Avoid B.C. and A.D.

•• **daylight-saving time** *not* daylight savings time.

The Navajo Reservation observes daylight-saving time, but the rest of Arizona and the Hopi Reservation do not.

• **day use** If a noun; day-use if used as an adjective.

• **degree** *see* temperature.

•• **departmentwide**

• **Depression** For the Great Depression in the 1930s.

•• **directions to reader in text and in captions/brochures.**

Set off in parentheses and italicize entire item, including parentheses.

*see below* directions to reader in text and captions/wayside exhibits.

The coat of the American black bear can be black, brown, or auburn (*left*).

The core of L’Enfant’s 1791 plan is the triangle created by the Capitol, the White House, and the Mall (*see map above*).

••**directions to reader in text and in captions/wayside exhibits.**

1) Avoid compass directions (east, west, north, south). Use easy-to-understand cues like left, right, ahead, behind. If a directional cue is used in the text, place it between roman parentheses and set in italic face.

The Snake River is six miles to your right.

*not* The Snake River is six miles to the east.

The coat of the American black bear can be black, brown, or auburn (*left*). Only "left" is italic face; the parentheses are roman.

2) Avoid written graphic directions for elements on the layout. It is more effective to put a label directly on the image.

*Graphic:* Photos of presidents posing with their dogs.

*Label directly on graphic:* Clinton/Buddy, lab; Bush/Barney, Scottish terrier; Obama/Bo, Portuguese water dog.

*Caption:* Many US presidents have enjoyed pets. Dogs have a special title: First Dog of the United States.

*not this wordy caption* Many US presidents have enjoyed pets. Dogs have a special title: First Dog of the United States. Here are three popular First Dogs. (*from left to right*) Clinton/Buddy, lab; Bush/Barney, Scottish terrier; Obama/Bo, Portuguese water dog).

••**disabled** Put the person before the disability; write persons or people with disabilities. Do *not* write handicapped. *see* hearing loss.

More information at [www.disability.gov](http://www.disability.gov).

The Longstocking Trail is wheelchair-accessible.

The C&O Canal has audio and video programs and large-print brochures for people with disabilities.

•**discover (territory)** Avoid; use explore, chart, venture, scout, etc.

•**discoverers** Avoid in reference to lands already populated; rewrite in a way that includes multiple points of view. *see* explorers.

•**Douglas fir**

••**during/in** Write "in" rather than "during," if possible. It's shorter.

September's exhibits will feature local quilts used in field hospitals in the Civil War.

•**Earth, earth** Earth is our planet; earth is soil or dirt.

•**east, eastern** Lowercase compass directions; minimize use of capital letters except for specific regions or popular place names. Eastern Shore of Maryland; East Coast; the East is east. *see* geographic regions.

•**elk** Commonly used name for wapiti (a large North American deer).

••**ellipsis** The omission of a word, phrase, line, paragraph, or more from a quoted passage is indicated by ellipsis dots (also called periods or points). Ellipsis dots must *always* appear together on the same line.

Many style manuals now recommend a single method: three evenly spaced dots that may be preceded or followed by any necessary punctuation marks.

*Note:* Wayside exhibits use a different formula. *see* ellipsis/wayside exhibits. *see below* ellipsis/brochures.

*see below* ellipsis/wayside exhibits.

## ••ellipsis/brochures

1) **Ellipsis in the same sentence.** Use three evenly spaced dots to indicate deleted material within the same sentence. Writers following the *Chicago* style will take the time to produce the ellipsis manually. Write *space–dot–space–dot–space–dot–space*. *Note:* There is no period within the following sentence.

“If a stop cannot be put to these massacres, the country will be depopulated . . . as neither Whig nor Tory can live.” Nathanael Greene, 1780

2) **Ellipsis within a paragraph.** Paragraphs include sentences with punctuation marks like periods or question marks, but the three dots must still be spaced evenly (after or before those punctuation marks). If sentence ends with a period, question mark, or exclamation mark, use it (to avoid ambiguity) and then three dots. Here is a condensation of President Nixon’s resignation speech using regular punctuation marks (periods at the end of sentences) and three dots to show omissions:

“In all the decisions I have made in my public life, I . . . tried to do what was best for the nation. . . . I have never been a quitter. . . . But as President, I must put the interest of America first. . . . Therefore, I shall resign the presidency effective at noon tomorrow.” *Richard Nixon, August 8, 1974*

••**ellipsis/wayside exhibits** Due to space limitations wayside exhibits often use an ellipsis. Punctuation marks preceding or following the ellipsis are *not* used. Word processing programs offer a single key stroke (glyph) that applies a three-dot ellipsis. Using the glyph ensures correct letterspacing and keeps the ellipsis on the same line. Here is President Nixon’s speech using the wayside exhibits formula (an ellipsis glyph and no punctuation).

“In all the decisions I have made in my public life, I...tried to do what was best for the nation...I have never been a quitter...But as President, I must put the interest of America first...Therefore, I shall resign the presidency effective at noon tomorrow.” *Richard Nixon, August 8, 1974*

•**email addresses** Do *not* use capital letters unless address is case-sensitive.  
mobydick@ocean.edu

•**em dash, en dash** *see* dashes; *see* hyphens.

•**en route**

••**enslaved** *not* slave. Enslaved acknowledges the dignity of a human being; slave is a non-person, property. Park staffs disagree on usage; use park staff’s preference. *see* slave/slavery/slaveholder.

1619 Twenty Africans are sold into servitude in Jamestown, Virginia. Institutional slavery includes branding of the enslaved.

1857 Supreme Court’s *Dred Scott v. Sandford* decision. Judge Taney writes that an enslaved person is property and that only whites are US citizens.

•**ensure, insure** Ensure means to make certain; insure means to provide for insurance.

Careful planning can help ensure an enjoyable cross-country hike.  
The policy insures her life.

••**eras** Write BCE (before common era) and CE (common era). Do *not* write B.C. or A.D. BP (before present) is a term found in scholarly works.

The first people to settle permanently in the Tonto Basin arrived between 100 CE and 600 CE.

- European American** *not* Euro-Americans. Be specific when possible.

Sir Francis Drake, English mariner.

Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, Portuguese explorer.

French missionaries and settlers from the East Coast.

European Americans began mining for copper in the early 1800s.

- explorers** Refers to people venturing into territory unknown to them. Bear in mind that the territory may already be populated. Avoid “discoverers” unless that is truly the case. Consider others’ points of view. In certain cases, the term “travelers” may be appropriate. *see* discoverers.

- farther, further** Farther refers to physical distance, further to an extension of time or quantity.

Lydia walked farther than Mark along Cumberland Island’s shore.

Thomas will look further into the disappearance of the office laptop.

- federal** federal government, federal law, federal property, federal funds, *but* when writing about the Civil War—use Federal soldier, Federal forces, Federal fort, and Federal government.

Use a capital letter for the architectural style and for corporate or governmental bodies that use the word as part of their formal names: Federal-style architecture of the late 1700s, Federal Express, the Federal Trade Commission.

- Federalist** Federalist Party; Federalist Papers.

- fewer, less** In general use fewer for numbers or individual items that can be counted; less for quantity and bulk.

Fewer birds came to the feeder because Yuriko put out less food.

- firearms regulations** Legislation passed in February 2010 allowing firearms in national parks; federal, state, and local laws apply and can vary.

For firearms regulations check the park website.

- firepit**

- firewood**

- first-come, first-served** No need to write “*are on a first-come, first-served basis.*” Keep it short, be direct.

Wolverine Campground is open year-round, first-come, first-served.

- first lady** Not a formal title; do not capitalize. NPS sites that feature first ladies may request initial capital letters; use park staff’s preference.

*see The Associated Press Stylebook, 43rd Edition, 2008.*

President Obama and first lady Michelle Obama will host honorees at the White House before the performance.

If the president was a bachelor or widower, or if his wife was unable to perform the role, other female relatives or friends were called upon to carry out the First Lady’s official duties; thus there have been more First Ladies than presidents.

*see* First Ladies National Historic Site brochure and website.

- First Nation/First Nations** First Nation is a term of ethnicity that refers to the Aboriginal people in Canada who are neither Inuit (people of the Canadian Arctic) nor Métis (descendants of First Nation people who married Europeans). It is commonly used in the plural in the collective sense, as in a

program for First Nations youth. The term is widely accepted by the Canadian government. The term is *not* used in the United States, except in connection with Métis whose homelands include northwest Minnesota, North Dakota, or other northern states.

- **fish or fishes?** Fish can be singular or plural (same word, no *es*). Fishes (plural) is correct but used less often; it usually refers to more than one species.

We went fishing for brook trout and caught six fish. (Single species.)

Ichthyology is the study of fishes. (Many species.)

The Smithsonian Institution's fish collection, about four-million specimens, is the largest in the world.

- **flash flood**

- **footwear, footgear**

- **foreign words** Do *not* italicize foreign words and phrases that are familiar to most readers. *see Chicago Manual of Style, 15th Edition.*

You can buy tortillas and guacamole at the concession stand.

A translation following a foreign word is enclosed in parentheses.

The word she wanted was *pécher* (to sin) not *pêcher* (to fish).

- **Forest Service** Forest Service, US Dept. of Agriculture. The Forest Service was established in 1905 and is an agency of the US Department of Agriculture. The initialisms (*see acronyms*) USDA-FS and USFS are controversial because of their historical usage. It is best to coordinate with signage in the park. It is important to distinguish the federal agency from state forest agencies. In our media the federal agency is generally referred to as the Forest Service. In text try to use specific names or titles of forest service areas.

Campgrounds are in Mount Baker National Forest.

The visitor center in Escalante, Utah, houses National Park Service, Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management offices.

- **four-wheel drive, 4-wheel drive?** Four-wheel-drive is preferred in interpretive text that modifies a trail or vehicle; on a map use the 4WD symbol or label as 4-wheel drive. Abr. 4WD.

Most unpaved roads to the summit require a four-wheel-drive vehicle. Ask a ranger or get information at the visitor center before you start out. (Sample text in Planning Your Visit.)

Unpaved road. 4-wheel-drive vehicles only. (label on map)

- **fractions** In text spell out if amounts are less than one, if standing alone, or if followed by “of a” or “of an”—use a hyphen between the words. Use fractions in unit modifiers (even if amount is less than one). Try to stack numbers in the fraction  $\frac{3}{4}$  *not* 5/8.

In March three-fourths of the lake is open to anglers. *not* In March  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the lake is open to anglers.

The beetle is three-quarters of an inch long.

The steep  $\frac{1}{2}$ -mile hike takes about one hour round-trip.

*but* The steep trail is one-half mile long.

- **fresh water** Two words if a noun; one word if an adjective. *see salt water.*

- **frontcountry** Avoid if possible; it is jargon.

- **genus, species** *see scientific names.*

- **geographic names** For text issued by federal agencies, the US Board on Geographic Names (BGN) determines the federally recognized place names and spellings of geographic features in the United States and its territories.

*For general information:* Geographic Names Information System (GNIS)  
<http://geonames.usgs.gov>

*For specific information:* To find federally recognized names  
<http://geonames.usgs.gov/domestic/index.html>

1) Federally recognized names—as a US government agency, we are mandated to use federally recognized place names as listed in the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS).

2) Variant name—these often include historical, locally used names, and misspellings; if using a variant name, show the federally recognized name first and the variant name second; the variant name must be clearly distinguished as a variant (for example, put the variant name in parenthesis or different type size or type face).

3) Historical names—place names can be used in a historical context; watch out for names that use 's (apostrophe and s) and names that may be one or two words.

Sierra Nevada *not* Sierra Nevada Mountains

The Narrows *not* Verrazano Narrows (the water channel) *but* the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge crosses The Narrows.

At 20,320 feet Mount McKinley is the highest mountain in North America.

The Battle of Wilson's Creek took place along Wilsons Creek.

The courthouse in the village of Appomattox Court House was built in 1846.

- **geographic regions** Minimize use of capital letters except for specific regions or popular place names.

Northern California; Southern Appalachians; Bay Area; Upper Peninsula; Pacific Northwest; West Coast; East Coast; Midwest; Gulf Coast.

- ***Giardia lamblia*** The organism; may be abbreviated *G. lamblia*.

- **giardiasis** The illness caused by the *Giardia lamblia* organism.

- **Gila monster**

- **gray** The color *but* greyhound.

- **groundhog**

- **guide dogs** *see* service animals.

- **guided hikes** *see* self-guiding trail.

- **gulls** Members of a large family of seabirds; correctly called gulls but often referred to as seagulls.

- **Harpers Ferry Center** *not* the Harpers Ferry Center (no article).

- **Hawaiian diacritical marks** Hawaiian diacritical marks are already included in all OpenType versions of NPS Rawlinson OT. To get Hawaiian diacritical marks for the OpenType version of Adobe Frutiger, you must request HFrutiger LT Std from the Office of NPS Identity.  
[www.graphics.nps.gov/type-hawaiian.htm](http://www.graphics.nps.gov/type-hawaiian.htm)

- **Hawaiian words** Do not add 's (apostrophe and s) to Hawaiian words to form possessives. You must use Hawaiian fonts to spell Hawaiian words with macrons over vowels (ā, ē, ī, ō, ū) and glottal stops (‘) in certain cases. These appear in several official park names and brochures.

The island of Pele *not* Pele's island.

The visitor center for the USS *Arizona* Memorial is a 45-minute drive from Waikīkī.

The trail will lead you past the Kaloko-Honokōhau and ‘Aimakapā fishponds and the ‘A‘ōpio fishtrap.

- **hearing loss** Or hard of hearing. *not* hearing impaired.

The film about George Washington Carver is captioned. Audio guides and neck loops are available for people with hearing loss.

- **highcountry**

- **highways** Use official designation (as noted on maps); list official designation first and local name second in parentheses. For state route abbreviations use US postal codes. Write Hwy., *not* HWY (all caps).

I-75 (Alligator Alley)

NE 7 *not* State Route 7

US 1 *not* US Highway 1

39063 US Hwy. 95 (a park address)

- **historic** Important, notable, or significant in history; usually refers to famous people or events. For example, a historic announcement might change the course of human events.

*Note:* Historic and historical have different meanings; the words are often mistakenly interchanged. *see* historical.

The Old Courthouse was the site of the historic Supreme Court Dred Scott decision that proclaimed slaves were property and had no right to sue.

FDR's historic declaration on December 8, 1941, launched the United States into World War II.

- **historical** Refers to whatever existed in the past; also refers to anything concerned with history or the study of the past. For example, a historical announcement is about something that happened in the past. *see* historic.

The ranger gave a historical lecture on Western trails at the campfire ring.

Jamie loves historical novels.

- **holidays** Use actual dates *not* traditional names *but* Thanksgiving Day.

The park is closed Thanksgiving Day, December 25, and January 1.

- **hyphens** Use a hyphen between two or more words combined to form a modifier preceding the word modified, *except* when the first word ends in *ly*. *see* dashes; *see* hyphen/wayside exhibits.

rust-resistant alloy

The long-awaited bridge replaced a series of ferry crossings.

The backed-up water behind Hoover Dam forms a 110-mile-long lake.

*but* a federally funded project

When two or more hyphenated compounds have a common basic element, the hyphens are all retained.

4- to 5-ton trucks

8-, 10-, and 16-foot boards

moss- and ivy-covered walls, *not* moss and ivy-covered walls

At Lake Mead you might spot largemouth bass swimming at 5- to 10-foot depths.

- **hyphens/wayside exhibits** Avoid hyphens. Hyphenated words can be difficult to decipher, and putting words back together can be a stumbling block for some readers.

- **ice age** *but* Wisconsin Ice Age; Ice Age Reserve.
- **icefield**
- **Indian** *see* American Indian. *see* First Nation.
- **in/within** Write “in” rather than “within,” if possible. It’s shorter.  
*see* during.  
Wolves are protected in the park.
- **initialism** An abbreviation formed from the initials of a name, title, or long term that is read as a series of letters. ATM, BBC, FDR, DOI, NPS.  
*avoid* bureaucratic use of obscure initialisms in public media.  
*see* acronym; *see* NPS (when to use an article).
- **initials** Franklin D. Roosevelt; FDR and JFK (no periods and no spaces); *but* W.E.B. Du Bois, P.D. James (periods, no spaces between initials), P.O. Box (space between O. and Box only).  
W.E.B. Du Bois cofounded the NAACP and supported the rights of black Americans.
- **insure** *see* ensure.
- **intellectual disability** *not* mental retardation. President Obama enacted the federal law called Rosa’s Law in August 2010.  
Ask the park about activities for persons with intellectual disabilities.
- **international biosphere reserve (wording)** “(Park name), part of a major ecosystem that protects the diversity of life, was named an international biosphere reserve in (year).”
- **international visitors** *not* foreign visitors.
- **Internet** Capitalize.
- **Internet address** Do not use capital letters unless address is case-sensitive; *see* website.  
[www.google.com](http://www.google.com); [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)
- **invasive species** *not* alien or foreign (these have a negative connotation and can offend resident immigrants and international visitors).  
*see* [www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov](http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov).  
Invasive plants like faya and kahili ginger displace areas of Hawaiian forests.
- **iPhone, iPod, iPad** Brand names beginning with a lowercase letter retain the lowercase even at the beginning of a sentence or heading.  
*see* app, smartphone.  
iPod tours of Cupcake Corner National Historic Site are available for download.
- **italics** *see* foreign words, quotations (display and headline type examples); measurements (English and metric differences); ships, and more.
- **Japanese American** No hyphen.  
In March 1942 Japanese Americans were transported under military guard to Manzanar, an internment camp in California.
- **Jet Ski®** A registered trademark; avoid using. *see* PWC.



- john boat/jon boat** A small flatbottomed boat with square ends used to navigate shallow rivers. Either spelling is correct; use park staff's preference.
- Joshua tree** *but* Joshua Tree National Park.
- Jr./Sr./III** Abbreviations like these are part of a person's full name. Do *not* use a comma before Jr. or Sr. unless it is absolutely required as part of the official name. If you do use a comma before Jr. or Sr.—and the sentence continues—follow the abbreviation with another comma.
  - Donald Duck Jr. has swimming privileges in Lake Crescent.
  - Jack Frost III stole the show with his lavish costume and acrobatic dance steps.
  - Tours of the Martin Luther King, Jr., home are first-come, first-served.
- judgment** preferred spelling. *not* judgement.
- Kemp's ridley sea turtle**
- lifeguard** An expert swimmer on duty to watch other swimmers.
  - Seasonal lifeguard services are provided at Herring Cove.
  - Cape Cod National Seashore has lifeguard-protected beaches in summer.
- lifejacket** *see* PFD, personal flotation device.
- lifesaving station** One word unless it is a historical or proper name or if local signage requires otherwise.
  - By the 1890s lifesaving stations were located every 3.5 miles along the New Jersey coast.
  - The Old Harbor Life-Saving Station at Cape Cod was built in 1897–98.
- livestock** *but* pack animals.
- loyalist** *see* American Revolution affiliations.
- map symbols and terminology** Be precise when choosing terminology for map symbols. Be aware of subtle differences—gas station (sells gas, may sell snacks) and service station (sells gas and does repairs, may sell snacks).

For symbols that you can use on your maps and publications:  
[www.nps.gov/hfc/carto/map-symbols.htm](http://www.nps.gov/hfc/carto/map-symbols.htm)

- measurements on maps** Measurement labels are abbreviated; no period is used after the abbreviation; there is no space between numeral and symbol (set name of feature in italics; measurements in roman).

*Mount Rainier*  
 14411ft  
 4392m

- measurements in text** Measurements are given in English measure; units of measure are spelled out, *not* abbreviated.

The trout weighed three pounds and was 16 inches long.

1) In text with specific measurements or when measurements are unit modifiers, the English measure is first, followed by the abbreviated metric equivalent in parentheses. Set metric in lowercase roman, use one space between the figure and the metric unit. Periods are not used with the metric abbreviation. Abbreviated symbol is always singular.

At 20,320 feet (6,194 m) Mount McKinley is North America's highest peak.

2) Metric is used in text only if circumstances call for it—such circumstances might include parks with a high number of international visitors, scientific usage, or a specific request by a park.

••**Medal of Honor** The official title is Medal of Honor. This highest honor is awarded by the president of the United States to members of the US armed forces. Because the award citation includes the phrase “in the name of Congress,” it is sometimes erroneously called the Congressional Medal of Honor.

In 1900 Sgt. William H. Carney, veteran of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment, received the Medal of Honor for rescuing the flag during the Battle of Fort Wagner, South Carolina, in 1863.

•**media** This plural noun takes a plural verb.

Media, like brochures, maps, wayside exhibits, and films, are produced for park visitors at Harpers Ferry Center.

There are no interpretive media at Rainy Day Visitor Center, but plans for site bulletins and wayside exhibits are underway.

••**mental retardation** *see* intellectual disability.

•**metric** *see* measurements.

•**Mexican War** *see* US-Mexican War.

••**military ranks** Spell out or abbreviate?  
*see below* military ranks/brochures.  
*see below* military ranks/wayside exhibits.

**Military Officers—ranks and equivalents**

Army	Navy
[5 Stars] General of the Army	Fleet Admiral
[4 Stars] Gen. (General)	Adm. (Admiral)
[3 Stars] Lt. Gen. (Lieutenant)	Vice Adm.
[2 Stars] Maj. Gen. (Major)	Rear Adm. [upper]
[1 Star] Brig. Gen. (Brigadier)	Rear Adm. [lower]
	Com. (Commodore)
Col. (Colonel)	Capt. (Captain)
Lt. Col.	Cmdr. (Commander)
Maj.	Lt. Cmdr.
Capt.	Lt.
1st Lt. (First Lieutenant)	Lt. jg (Junior Grade)
2nd Lt.	Ens. (Ensign)

*Note:* Do *not* use “Brevet” in connection with any rank unless there is a reason for it and the term can be explained.

••**military ranks/brochures** In brochures ranks are typically abbreviated followed by the person’s name. Abbreviate rank if used with complete name; spell out rank if used with last name only; in subsequent references, may use last name without rank (if specifically requested by park staff, rank can be spelled out when first used with complete name). *Note:* This is the style used by the US military.

Gen. Robert E. Lee      General Lee      Lee advanced

- military ranks/wayside exhibits** In wayside exhibits ranks are spelled out because abbreviations can be unfamiliar—and potential roadblocks for visitors who spend a short time reading an exhibit. Evaluate the available space. If there is room spell out rank at first mention (you may show the abbreviation in parentheses for use later or simply use the last name). When quoting someone use this formula: name, rank, military unit.

Fort Rosecrans was named for Major General William S. Rosecrans, commander of the Union Army of the Cumberland.

Rosecrans was popular with his troops, who called him Old Rosy.

*"There was no sign of faltering with the men, the only cry being for more ammunition, which unfortunately could not be supplied."*

Phillip Sheridan, brigadier general, commanding 3rd Division, Right Wing.

[wayside exhibit at Stones River National Battlefield]

- mission statement** The mission of the Department of the Interior is to protect and provide access to our nation's natural and cultural heritage and honor our trust responsibilities to tribes. The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

- money** nine million dollars; \$35 million; \$35,000,000.

- More Information format** Stack information on separate lines for easier reading. If a park name and designation is extra long, break onto two lines; keep proper name on first line, designation on second line.

**More Information**

Cabrillo National Monument

1800 Cabrillo Memorial Dr.

San Diego, CA 92106-3601

TTY/619-224-4140; 619-557-5450

[www.nps.gov/cabr](http://www.nps.gov/cabr)

Cedar Creek and Belle Grove

National Historical Park

[address, etc.]

Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania

National Military Park

[address, etc.]

- more than** *see over.*
- mountain lion** *see cougar.*
- mountaintop**
- mph** miles per hour. Abbreviation (no periods) is acceptable in all references.
- nation** *but the Nation's Capital.*
- National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass** This is sufficient; it is *not* necessary to preface with America the Beautiful.
- National Park Service** *not "the Park Service" (to avoid confusing with state and county parks).*

- **national park, national parks, national monuments**

Lowercase unless part of a proper name. *see* capitalization.

Many national parks charge entrance fees.

Congaree National Park is in South Carolina.

Cabrillo and Lava Beds national monuments are in California.

- **national seashore** *but* Fire Island National Seashore.

- **Native American** Avoid unless requested by specific groups.  
*see* American Indian.

- **9/11** Acceptable in all references to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States; can use Sept. 11, 2001, if needed for clarity (year).

- **North (the)** *see* Civil War.

- **north, northern** Lowercase compass directions; minimize use of capital letters except for specific regions or popular place names. *see* geographic regions.

Acadia is northeast of Boston.

California's North Coast.

- **NPS** When do I use the article “the”? Initialisms like NPS are read as a series of letters. If NPS is a noun use “the.” If NPS is used as an adjective do *not* use “the.” *see* acronym; *see* initialism; .

The Friends Foundation funds programs that are beyond the financial capacity of the NPS. (noun)

Acquiring new acreage is in accordance with applicable law and NPS policy. (adj.)

- **numbers** Spell out numbers one through nine; use figures for 10 or greater; if a series of numbers appears in a sentence, use above guidelines. Spell out a numeral at the beginning of a sentence (regardless of amount), or rewrite.

Yesterday two mules slid off Bright Angel trail.

The three hikers passed by eight overlooks and 15 waterfalls.

Forty-five species of birds are found in the park.

Use commas within numbers greater than 999 (but *not* within dates). *see* dates.

Over 1,000 bats live in Black Hole Cave.

Northern Plains Indians lived along the Upper Missouri River for over 9,000 years.

The smallpox epidemic of 1837 killed thousands of Northern Plains Indians.

*Note:* Use judgment and be consistent throughout the media. Style guides disagree; some spell numbers one through nine and use figures for 10 and greater; others spell numbers one through ninety-nine and use figures for 100 and greater—all have exceptions.

- **one-way** If used as an adjective; one way if noun; *never* write 1-way.  
*see* round-trip.

Cedar River Gorge is a one-way loop road that winds through old-growth forest.

There is more than one way to reach the campground.

- **over** This may be used as an equivalent of more than. Traditionally “over” referred to spatial relationships and “more than” referred to quantity and numerals. Today, “over” is preferred, but “more than” may be used as necessary to aid clarity.

Over 1,100 men died in the battle.

We encountered winds of over 50 miles per hour as we flew over Snoqualmie Pass.

Trailers over 30 feet long are prohibited on Corkscrew Pass.

More than 800 brown pelicans flew over Anacapa Island.

• **pack animals** *but* livestock.

• **panther** *see* cougar.

•• **park** Capitalize “P” if writing the full name; lower case when referring to the park without full name.

Dry Tortugas National Park lies at the western end of the Florida Keys.  
The national park needs your support to help protect the manatee.

• **park area in more than one state** List states in alphabetical order separated by a space, forward slash, and a space.

Cumberland Gap National Historical Park Kentucky / Tennessee / Virginia  
Yellowstone National Park Idaho / Montana / Wyoming

•• **park boundary** *see* boundary/boundaries.

• **parklands**

•• **park’s** It is OK to drop the possessive (apostrophe and s) when writing about the park website or park policies.

For a list of ranger-led tours check the park website. *not* the park’s website.  
The park firearms policy is posted in the visitor center.

•• **parkwide**

Interpretive planners made parkwide recommendations for Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front National Historical Park.

• **patriot** *see* American Revolution affiliations.

•• **pelt**

Tribal chiefs and leading warriors negotiated with traders at Fort Union Trading Post to get the best possible trade goods for their people. Popular exchanges included buffalo robes and beaver pelts for cloth, beads, pots, and guns.

•• **people/persons** Traditionally *persons* was used for small groups (three persons) and *people* with large groups (hundreds of people). Today it is acceptable to use *people* for small groups. *see Chicago Manual of Style, 15th Edition.*

Three people signed up for lunch-time Spanish classes at Saguaro National Park.

• **percent** Spell out “percent” in text (one space between numeral and spelled-out word); use % symbol in scientific writing and in tables (no space between numeral and symbol).

Visitation to the park’s hot springs increased this year by 25 percent.

*2011 Hantavirus Report*

Deer mice population on Minnie Island	1,000
Population captured and tested for hantavirus	850
Cultures resulting in positive testing	60%

•• **personal watercraft** In text spell out at first mention with PWC in parentheses; on map legends use symbol and spell out. *see* Jet Ski.

Personal watercraft (PWC) are considered vessels; you are responsible for knowing and observing regulations governing their use.

•• **pit house**

• **PFD** Personal flotation device; spell out at first mention with PFD in parentheses.

Always wear a personal flotation device (PFD) when boating on Lake Roosevelt.

• **poisonous** *see* snakes.

•• **possessive** If a singular noun, add 's (apostrophe and s) unless final consonant is "s." *see Chicago Manual of Style, 15th Edition, 7.17* possessives: general rule, exceptions, and options. Be consistent throughout the project; use park staff's preference. *see* ships; *see* Hawaiian words.

the cat's tail

Grant Kohrs' longhorns roamed the open range.

1) If a plural noun ends in s, add only an apostrophe.

The visitors' entrance is on the left.

Cannon fire set the officers' quarters ablaze.

2) Plural nouns not ending in s, add 's (apostrophe and s).

women's rights

alumni's feelings

•• **pm** No periods, small letters (no capitals); style guides differ. *see* time of day.

• **President, president** Capitalize president only as a formal title before one or more names: President Reagan, Presidents Ford and Carter. Lowercase in all other uses.

President Clinton visited Harpers Ferry NHP on Earth Day, April 1998.

Lincoln was president during the Civil War.

She is running for president of the United States.

• **presidency**

Roosevelt assumed the presidency at a time of great social ferment.

• **presidential**

*but* Rosa Gonzales received the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

• **prickly pear cactus**

• **pronghorn** Pronghorn not a true antelope; clarify at first mention with "often called antelope."

• **quotations** Display or headline type: set quotation in italics with *no* quotation marks (author credit in roman type).

*A curious ensemble of wonderful features.* John Wesley Powell, 1869

1) Do capitalize first word: if quotation is a complete sentence or introduced with a colon or comma.

Chief Joseph said, "From where the sun now stands I will fight no more forever."

2) Do *not* capitalize first word: if quotation is fragmentary and placed in running text (without comma or colon).

Chief Joseph said he would "fight no more forever."

•• **quotation marks** The period and comma *always* go within the quotation marks. The dash, semicolon, question mark, and exclamation mark go within the quotation marks if they apply directly to the quoted material; they go outside if they apply to the whole sentence.

Gayle asked, "When does the next tour begin?"

Trevor shouted, "The meadow is on fire!"

Do you agree with the saying, "All is fair in love and war."?

Common expressions and slang. If colloquial expressions or slang are well-known to readers, it is *not* necessary to enclose them in quotation marks. But expressions or words that are unfamiliar should be in quotation marks so people don't take them literally.

Bands of trappers explored the network of rivers west of the Mississippi for hundreds of miles in search of "soft gold"—the pelts of fur-bearing animals.

- **rain forest**
- **ranger** *but* Ranger Baker.
- **rebel** *see* Civil War.
- **red-tailed hawk**
- **Representative** A civil or military title preceding a full name may be abbreviated. Preceding a surname only, the title is spelled out. *see* initials, military ranks, surnames, and titles.
  - Representative Pinkerton began his first term in 1909.
  - Rep. Grant Pinkerton encouraged President Taft to sign the Arizona Statehood Act in 1912, making it the 48th state.
- **Revolutionary War** *see* American Revolution affiliations.
- **rivers** Columbia River *but* Columbia and Snake rivers.
- **Rio Grande** *Rio Grande River* is redundant; *rio* means river in Spanish. If visitors don't know Spanish, clarify word at first mention.
  - The Rio Grande (river) in Big Bend National Park is a designated National Wild and Scenic River.
- **round-trip** Hyphenated, both as an adjective and as a noun.
- **ruin** Avoid unless included in proper name; use dwelling, site, structure. *see* abandoned.
  - Ancestral Puebloan people built these dwellings over 1,000 years ago.
  - The 2.5-mile trail to White House Ruin is on the canyon's South Rim Drive.
- **RV** Abbreviation for recreational vehicle; no need to spell out this commonly used initialism.
  - RV parking is available at Stinky Skunk campground.
- **salt water** If used as a noun; saltwater if an adjective. *see* fresh water.
- **salt marsh** If used as a noun; saltmarsh if an adjective.
- **scientific names** Latin names of plants and animals (genus and species) are set in italic type. Always capitalize genus names, but *never* capitalize species names even if they are in a capitalized title. Divisions higher than genus (phylum, class, order, family) are set in roman type and are capitalized.
  - In late spring Atlantic horseshoe crabs, *Limulus polyphemus*, climb ashore in Delaware Bay, where females deposit eggs.
- **seagulls** *see* gulls.
- **sea life, sea star** *but* seabird, seaside, starfish.

• **self-guiding trail** *not* self-guided; avoid writing “nature” (most trails are nature trails in some way); avoid writing “interpretive” trail (visitors may expect a ranger-led tour).

• **Senator** A civil, legislative, or military title preceding a full name may be abbreviated. Preceding a surname only, the title is spelled out. *see* initials, military ranks, surnames, and titles.

Senator Truman began his second term in early 1941.

Sen. John Quincy Adams supported Thomas Jefferson in the Louisiana Purchase.

•• **servicewide**

•• **service animals** Service animals is the preferred term for guide dogs or signal dogs. Regulations published in the Federal Register in September 2010 for the Americans with Disability Act (ADA), define a service animal as “a dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability.” For information visit [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov).

Pets are not allowed in the campground, but service animals are welcome.

• **sexist language** Rewrite gracefully. Avoid “he/she.”

work force *not* manpower

founders *not* founding fathers

crafted, worked *not* craftsmanship

Polychrome pottery specimens at Tonto National Monument are exquisitely crafted.

•• **shard** A piece of broken pottery, especially one found at an archeological site. Also *sherd*.

Archeologists found Pueblo black mesa pottery shards strewn in the creek bed.

• **she** A female; use “it” *not* “she” for a country, ship, or nature.

Portugal raised its flag over Macao for the last time in December 1999.

• **Shenandoah Valley** *but* the valley.

•• **ships, aircraft, spacecraft, trains, vehicles**

Names of ships, aircraft, spacecraft, and artificial satellites are set in italics.

Abbreviations before the name, if used, are set in roman. Do not use periods in the abbreviation preceding a ship name. When forming the possessive the “s” is set in roman. *Note about ships:* Use “it” *not* “she.”

A ship is a seaworthy vessel too large to dock unassisted, *but* write ferryboat and gunboat.

USS *Arizona* or *Arizona*

*Challenger's* crew

*Spirit of St. Louis*

*Missouri's* turret

*Sputnik* motivated the United States to take action.

*Air Force One* refers to any aircraft that carries the US president.

If the text is already set in italics, like some quotations and captions, then set the name in roman.

*Sputnik motivated the United States to take action.*

*The greatest loss was on board USS Arizona.*

Names of trains, classes or makes of vehicles, and space programs are capitalized but *not* set in italics.

Chrysler Imperial

Project Mercury

the train they call the City of New Orleans

3) Generic terms for vessels and aircraft are neither capitalized nor italicized.

submarine

space shuttle



- **shuttle bus** *not* shuttlebus. Be consistent with local signage.
  - **slack water** If used as a noun; slackwater if an adjective.
  - **slave/slavery** A slave, describing a person, is considered by many to be a dehumanizing term. Slavery, an action forced on people, wasn't inherent to them as human beings. At first mention try to use "enslaved" when referring to men, women, children, people. But slave may be used sparingly thereafter. (Slave is still used by many mainstream publications.) Park staffs disagree on usage; use park staff's preference.
    - The first enslaved laborers were brought to the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam, today's Lower Manhattan, in 1629.
  - **slaveholder** Someone who possessed enslaved people; preferred over slaveowner or slavemaster.
    - George Washington, slaveholder and first US president, requested that his enslaved workers be freed upon his death.
  - **small game**
  - **smartphone** Generic term for a mobile phone with computing ability and Internet connectivity. *see* app, iPhone.
    - At Manassas National Battlefield Park use your smartphone to download a battle app that features animated maps, photos, and videos.
  - **smoothbore**
  - **snakes** Poisonous or venomous? Herpetologists may prefer venomous, but the words are interchangeable in everyday usage. Poisonous is perhaps the more easily understood term.
    - Poisonous snakes live in the canyon. Watch where you put your hands and feet.
  - **spaces** One or two in text composition? On a typewriter use two spaces after a period. On a computer and for typesetting use one space after a period. *see Chicago Manual of Style, 15th Edition.*
- Subheads (titles) at the beginning of paragraphs. Use an en space after a subhead in a running paragraph. (Em spaces are too long.)
- Things To See and Do** Sign up for the wild cave tour at the visitor center.
- **Spanish language, accents, special characters, punctuation** Many Spanish words include accented vowels and the ñ with a tilde. The spelling is wrong without these marks. Questions and exclamations require inverted leading punctuation marks.
    - see Chicago Manual of Style, 15th Edition* and other sources.
      - en los años de 1760      el río Bravo
      - ¿Dónde está el parque nacional, por favor?
      - ¡Toma un galón de agua por persona por día!
  - **Spanish language, capitals** Capitalize only the first word in titles (books, exhibits). Forms of address (Mr., Dr. etc.) before names are lowercase. *see Chicago Manual of Style, 15th Edition* and other sources.
    - El desierto chihuahuense      (The Chihuahuan Desert)
    - Golondrinas puebleras      (Cave Swallows)
    - el señor Tomás López
    - el doctor Garcia

- **Spanish language, compound names** If a Spanish name contains “de”, which means “of” or “from,” it must be lowercase. Avoid dividing compound names of persons and places at the end of lines.  
*see* Spanish language, word division: *HFC Spanish Style Guide* ([www.nps.gov/hfc/products/imi/imi-docs.htm](http://www.nps.gov/hfc/products/imi/imi-docs.htm)), and *Chicago Manual of Style, 15th Edition*.
  - Hidalgo de Parral
  - San Antonio de Béxar
  - don Juan Ponce de León
  - Hernando de Soto *but* De Soto National Memorial (park name)
  
- **Spanish language, word division** Divide Spanish words after a vowel or group of vowels; do not divide two or more adjacent vowels. A single vowel may *not* stand alone at the end of a line. Spanish *ch*, *ll*, and *rr* are considered single characters—do *not* divide. Avoid dividing proper names. Compound place names are considered one word—do not divide.  
*see* *Chicago Manual of Style, 15th Edition* and other sources.
 

bue-no		mu- <i>jer</i>
ene-ro	<i>not</i> e-nero	uni-dad <i>not</i> u-nidad
San Diego		Cabrillo
  
- ***Spanish Style Guide*** Published by Harpers Ferry Center. Manual to help with Spanish/English translations for brochures, films, and exhibits. Topics include capitalization, grammar, punctuation rules, standard usage issues, vocabulary choices, and word division.  
[www.nps.gov/hfc/products/imi/imi-docs.htm](http://www.nps.gov/hfc/products/imi/imi-docs.htm)
  
- **Spanish, Spaniard** Either is correct if referring to people. Spanish is used commonly today; Spaniard is more formal. Don’t use “the Spanish” as a collective noun if you mean “the Spanish governor,” “the Spanish colonists,” or “the Spanish people.”
  
- **South (the)** *see* Civil War.
  
- **south (southern)** Lowercase compass directions; minimize use of capital letters except for specific regions. Southern Appalachians. *see* geographic regions.
  
- **Sr.** *see* Jr.
  
- **Star-Spangled Banner** The national anthem of the United States.  
 Francis Scott Key wrote the lyrics to the Star-Spangled Banner in 1814 after seeing the bombardment of Fort McHenry in Baltimore, Maryland, by British ships in the War of 1812.
  
- **state** state government, state regulations.
  
- **state names** Spell out or abbreviate? *see* *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition*.
  - 1) Brochure, exhibits, newspapers, and more. In running text spell out the names of states, territories, and possessions (except DC) when they follow the name of a city.
    - San Juan Island National Historical Park near Friday Harbor, Washington, has military camps, prairies, and beaches.
    - The War in the Pacific National Historical Park visitor center in Hagåtña, Guam, has exhibits about WWII.
    - The Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC, attracts over three million visitors each year.

2) Addresses, highways, lists, bibliographies, tabular items). Use two-letter postal codes (ZIP codes). *see* highways.

AZ ME WA MT DC ID

- **streets** Maple Street; but Cypress and Larch streets.
- **subject/word agreement** “Everyone (singular) will get their (plural) chance to see the cave,” is becoming more accepted to avoid gender-specific language—but *please* try to rewrite!  
Every visitor will get a chance.  
All visitors will have a chance.
- **summer months** June, July, August. In the northern hemisphere the summer months have the longest days and the highest average temperatures. *see* winter months.
- **sun**
- **superintendent** *but* Superintendent Martinez.
- **supervolcano** A term used to describe volcanic fields that can produce exceptionally large volcanic eruptions. Yellowstone National Park sits atop a supervolcano.  
You can learn about Yellowstone’s supervolcano—an idea that has captured the imaginations of people around the world—at Canyon Visitor Center.
- **surnames** Avoid Mr. and Mrs.; use full name (including initials), first and last names together, or last name alone. *see* titles.  
Maggie L. Walker organized the first black student school strike in the US.  
*not* Maggie organized . . .  
Carl and Lilian Sandburg lived in North Carolina.  
Greene slipped away before dawn on June 20, 1781.  
*but* Dr. King [Martin Luther King, Jr.]
- **takeout** One word if a noun or adjective. Two words if a verb.  
Canoe trips on the Green River end at the Bubbly Spring takeout.  
Ranger Ruby said, “Quit wiggling, and I’ll take out your splinter.”
- **telephone numbers** 123-456-7890 is preferred style (hyphens), but (123) 456-7890 is acceptable (be consistent within the project).
- **temperature** 32°F or 20–32°F in winter (en dash; no space after degree symbol).  
Expect temperatures in the 80s and 90s°F in summer.
- **timberline** Avoid, use tree line. (Timber is a commodity term.)
- **time of day** 8 am, 2 pm; spell out noon and midnight.  
At 4:30 am a mortar shell from Fort Johnson arched across the sky.  
She took the midnight train to Georgia.
- **titles** A civil, legislative, or military title preceding a full name may be abbreviated. Preceding a surname only, the title is spelled out. *see* initials, surnames.  
Sen. Robert Byrd championed federal workers in West Virginia.  
President Lincoln invited Frederick Douglass to the White House in 1863.

- **Tory** *see* American Revolution affiliations.
- **trailhead**
- **TTY** Text telephone Do *not* use TDD. Number precedes regular voice number, “Call TTY 301-123-4567; 301-123-8910.” If number is the same: Call TTY/voice 301-412-1212.
- **underground** *but* Underground Railroad.
- **Union** *see* Civil War.
- **unique** Avoid; use only if truly one of a kind.
- **United States, US** United States, a noun (spell out); US an adjective.  
*Note:* no periods in US.  
     Lyndon B. Johnson was elected to the US Senate in 1948.  
     The United States is part of the North American continent.
- **US government**
- **US House of Representatives, the House, the lower house of Congress.**
- **US-Mexican War (1846–1848)**  
     The US-Mexican War began on May 13, 1846, as the US Congress overwhelmingly voted in favor of President James K. Polk’s request to declare war on Mexico.
- **US Senate, the Senate, the upper house of Congress.**
- **venomous** *see* snakes.
- **visitor center** *but* North Cascades Visitor Center.
- **wapiti** *see* elk.
- **website** the web, World Wide Web, and Internet. *Note:* http:// (even www) generally are *not* needed anymore.  
     For information about programs and activities at Guadalupe Mountains National Park visit [www.nps.gov/gumo](http://www.nps.gov/gumo).
- **west, western** Lowercase compass directions; minimize use of capital letters except for specific regions or popular place names. Pacific Northwest; the West is west; West Coast. *see* geographic regions.
- **western red cedar**
- **wetland** *not* wet land.
- **wheelchair** *see* disabled.
- **Whig** *see* American Revolution affiliations.
- **white/white settlers** This term broadly means non-American Indians, people of varied ethnic origins. Avoid writing sentences like—“French missionaries settled the Mississippi valley.”—because it implies, incorrectly, that the area was uninhabited before that time. *see* Anglo, European-American; explorers.

- **white-tailed deer** *not* whitetailed or whitetail deer.
- **wilderness statement** Congress has designated [acres or percent] of [park name] for protection under the 1964 Wilderness Act. Wilderness is meant to protect forever the land's natural conditions, opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation, and scientific, educational, and historical values. In wilderness people can sense being part of the whole community of life on Earth. Preserving wilderness shows restraint and humility and benefits generations that will follow us. For information about the National Wilderness Preservation System visit [www.wilderness.net](http://www.wilderness.net).
- **wildfire**
- **wildlife**
- **winter months** December, January, February. In the northern hemisphere the winter months have the shortest days and the lowest average temperatures. *see* summer months.
- **word division** Divide according to natural pronunciation so that the part of the word left at end of line suggests the whole word. *see The American Heritage Dictionary of The English Language, Fourth Edition.*  
                   capac-ity *not* capa-city                                ser-vice (formerly serv-ice)
- **world heritage site** “(Park name) is listed as a world heritage site, the principal international recognition for natural and cultural areas of global significance.”
- **World War I, First World War, WWI**
- **World War II, Second World War, WWII** World Wars I and II; the two world wars.
- **Yankee** *see* Civil War.
- **year-round**
- **ZIP code** A series of numbers assigned by the US Postal Service to mail delivery areas in the US (ZIP is an acronym for Zone Improvement Plan). *see* state name abbreviations.  
                   Harper Ferry Center's ZIP code is 25425.