

Bowdoin College Editorial Style Guidelines

July 20, 2023

Why a Style Guide?

Bowdoin uses *The Chicago Manual of Style Seventeenth Edition* as its official guide on questions of style, grammar, and usage and follows *Chicago* in using *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* and the latest edition of its chief abridgment, *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, as its official guide to spelling, hyphenation, and meaning. The online version of the dictionary for that use can be found here: <https://www.merriam-webster.com>.

As a reader, you will see varying styles in use by all kinds of newspapers, magazines, books, online sources, and even other colleges and universities—so you may wonder why it is necessary for all of us at Bowdoin to follow the “rules” set forth in this document. Here’s the answer: Bowdoin has lots of different writers and lots of different types of writing: academic, news, marketing, editorial, sports, and more. Adhering to a set of guidelines and editorial style standards allows Bowdoin to present consistent and unified writing and to make it easy for our readers across all Bowdoin publications and types of writing. It’s as helpful and important to be as consistent in how we express ourselves in writing as we are with our brand marks and visual style.

The guidelines here address the topics and questions that come up most frequently, but they don’t cover everything—we are happy to answer questions, help with specific examples, or take suggestions! For any of those, contact Alison Bennie at abennie@bowdoin.edu or Leanne Dech at ldech@bowdoin.edu.

Note: There are some instances where the styles or formatting we recommend here are not possible, such as within website style limitations or in Constant Contact or other email templates. If the platform you are using precludes certain styles or uses, contact us in the Office of Communications and Public Affairs for guidance. If you see a discrepancy of this type (usually dashes and italics, but sometimes other things) in an email or web use, please know that it does not necessarily mean that is an accepted use in other instances.

A – when referring to a grade, *A* is not set off with quotation marks or any other special punctuation; *A* stands on its own. For plurals, no apostrophe is used except in the case of letters that might otherwise be confusing (*Bs* is correct; *A's* is correct so as not to be confused with the word *As*, for example).

a/an – the article *a* precedes nouns beginning with consonant sounds. *An* precedes nouns beginning with vowel sounds. Nouns beginning with a pronounced h, long u or eu sound, or the word *one* are preceded by *a*, not *an* (*a historic study*, *a historian*, *a union*, *such a one*; but *an honor*, *an herb*).

abbreviations – *The Chicago Manual* recommends the following:

Use periods with abbreviations that end in a lowercase letter (e.g., a.m., vol., etc.).

Use periods for initials standing for given names (*E. B. White*); do not use periods for an entire name replaced by initials (*JFK*). *Note the space between the initials.

Use no periods with abbreviations that appear in full capitals, whether two letters or more and even if lowercase letters appear within the abbreviation (*CEO*, *MD*, *PhD*, *US*).

When spelling out abbreviations or initialisms for things that are not in themselves capitalized (*GUI: graphical user interface*), don't capitalize the long form (*Graphical User Interface* is incorrect).

Use two-letter postal codes without periods for states, including US. (Note: In narrative text, it is preferable to spell out state names; in addresses and return addresses, use the postal codes. If you absolutely must abbreviate state names in running text, see *states*.)

academic department/program names – see *departments/offices*.

acronyms – when using acronyms or initialisms (*NSF* in place of *National Science Foundation*, for example) spell out the complete name during its first use, immediately followed by the acronym in parentheses. The acronym may then be used alone subsequently. It is not necessary to follow the full name with the acronym in parentheses if it is not used as an acronym anywhere later in the text, though you may wish to do this if the acronym is so widely used that it is more familiar to your readers than the spelled-out version.

AD – see *eras*.

addresses – Bowdoin recommends addresses have (at least) four lines and should follow the order given below:

1. the recipient and/or the department
2. Bowdoin College
3. XXXX College Station
4. Brunswick, ME 04011-XXXX

Alternative formats are permissible, if there is room for confusion, but return addresses on envelopes or other addresses that are clearly being written in a mail-to context, use the post office convention above, including the proper state abbreviation. (AP style uses different state abbreviations, so those may be used where AP is the given style, such as in press releases.)

administration – see *collective nouns*.

Advanced Placement – administered by the College Entrance Examination Board; may be abbreviated *AP* (*Advanced Placement program, AP test results*).

advance registration – For events or programs requiring registration in advance of the event, use this term, not *advanced registration*, which is incorrect.

advisor – the Bowdoin-preferred spelling of the word sometimes spelled *adviser*.

affect/effect – affect is a verb meaning “to have an influence on; to produce a change.” (*His sentiments did not affect my vote.*) A second, less common meaning is *emotion*, and the accent when this meaning is desired, usually in a psychology context, is on the first syllable.

Where people sometimes get into trouble is confusing *affect* with *effect*, which itself can have two meanings: a noun meaning “anything brought about by a cause or agent; a result” (*The effect of my vote was the termination of his employment.*), or a verb meaning “to cause” (*to effect a compromise...*).

African American – American of African heritage. Do not hyphenate as a noun or as an adjective. Do not use Afro-American. Note, *African American* and *Black* are not synonyms.

Africana Studies Program – capitalized as the official name of the department, but *Africana studies* when describing the field of study.

age – write out age and hyphenate when the age is used as an adjective: *The fifteen-year-old girl*; or when used as a noun substitute: *The fifteen-year-old*. Hyphens are not used in these instances: *He is fifteen years old.* or *She died at age eighty.* Ages above 100 are written numerically.

alma mater – do not italicize.

alum – a common, informal, generic short form of the singular, plural, masculine, and feminine terms below. Avoid use of the word *alum* in writing, except where the person being written about requests to be referred to with gender-neutral pronouns (including they, zhe, etc.), in which case it can be a useful way to avoid the gendered singular. Do not use “alums”—use the plural, “alumni,” instead.

alumna – a woman who attended Bowdoin (or another school or college). A woman does not need to have graduated from Bowdoin to be an alumna. (She needs only to have attended for one year. Though it is tempting to resolve the gender question with *graduates*, Bowdoin considers anyone who matriculated here as an alumna or alumnus, so they are not necessarily “graduates” of Bowdoin.) If you are writing a sentence that calls for the generic singular usage (one man or woman Bowdoin graduate), it would be simplest to recast the sentence in the plural and use alumni; otherwise you’re left having to refer to *an alumnus or an alumna*.

alumnae – the plural form of alumna: women who have attended or graduated from Bowdoin (or another school or college).

alumni – the plural form for men or a combination of men and women who have attended or graduated from Bowdoin (or another school or college). Sometimes misused in the singular. For a group of both men and women or for whom the gender breakdown is unknown, *alumni* is just fine.

alumnus – a man who attended Bowdoin (or another school or college). (He does not need to have graduated from Bowdoin to be an alumnus. He needs only to have attended for one year. Though it is tempting to resolve the gender question with *graduates*, Bowdoin considers anyone who matriculated here as an alumna or alumnus, so they are not necessarily “graduates” of Bowdoin.) If you are writing a sentence that calls for the generic singular usage (one man or woman Bowdoin graduate), it would be simplest to recast the sentence in the plural and use alumni; otherwise you’re left having to refer to *an alumnus or an alumna*.

a.m., A.M. – in time designations, use a.m. and p.m. (lowercase with periods) for running text; use A.M. and P.M. (small capital letters) in other places such as posters, formal programs, and invitations. In some instances, it is also acceptable to use A.M. and P.M. (uppercase, not small caps, with periods).

American Indian – Native American is preferred, and a reference to a specific tribe may be better in some cases. However, some among those who trace their roots to the aboriginal peoples of the Americas prefer American Indian. In certain historical works Indian may be appropriate. Context and the voice represented by the author matter. In instances where it is possible to determine preference of the person being written about, check with them.

ampersands (&) – avoid using in almost all cases; spell out the word *and* instead. In general, the use of ampersands should be confined to corporate names in which the ampersand is part of the proper name (e.g., *Procter & Gamble*). At Bowdoin, an ampersand is used in the name of the library’s George J. Mitchell Department of Special Collections & Archives and in the multiple-position titles of staff that contain more than one *and* (i.e., Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration & Treasurer Matthew Orlando), with the ampersand taking the place of the *and* that precedes what is, in effect, a second role; and

occasionally as a graphic design element to create a deliberate look on a publication or web page. Never use an ampersand as a substitute for the word *and* in running text.

anniversaries – should be written out, i.e., fiftieth anniversary.

apostrophes – this is the apostrophe to be used preceding the class year: *John Smith '95* (keyboard shortcut is option-shift-]). Do not use the single open quotation mark and do not use the apostrophe that faces the other direction: ‘

app – abbreviation for *application* on a mobile device; acceptable use in place of the full word. Sometimes used as a short form of *Common Application* as *Common App*, informal.

Arctic – capitalize when referring to the area around the North Pole, including the Arctic Ocean; lowercase when used as an adjective (*arctic temperatures*). Capitalize when referring to the Arctic Museum or Arctic Studies Center, even when not using the proper name.

Arctic Museum – see *Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum*.

Artist in residence – In general, titles like these should not contain hyphens (same for writer in residence or scholar in residence), but you should refer to the specific title given to any faculty member in a position like this for guidance.

Asian – of or pertaining to Asia.

Asian American – American of Asian lineage, not hyphenated.

autumn/fall – lowercase (*fall semester*; except in instances referencing to a specific semester, e.g., *Fall 2018*).

B – when referring to a grade, is not set off with quotation marks or any other special punctuation; stands on its own. For plurals, no apostrophe is used except in the case of letters that might otherwise be confusing (*Bs* is correct; *A's* is correct so as not to be confused with the word *As*, for example).

bachelor of arts – BA, BA's, bachelor of arts degree. Note: Some schools grant AB degrees, for *artium baccalaureus*. If you graduate from Bowdoin, your degree is conferred in Latin, and your diploma is in Latin. Generally, older colleges and universities are the ones that have kept this pattern.

bachelor's degree – BA, BA's, BS, BS's. Always one bachelor, even if there are many degrees. (*Each year, Bowdoin grants more than 475 bachelor's degrees.*)

BC – see *eras*.

between you and me – grammatically correct. *Between you and I* is incorrect.

bias-free content – in keeping with the College's explicit policy of not discriminating, use words and constructions that are free from bias and that do not reinforce negative stereotypes. This is an area in which recommendations often change and where language itself is dynamic—see specific entries in this list for guidance and please contact us to discuss any questions you have.

Bible – capitalized, not italicized, but *biblical* is lowercase.

BIPOC – initialism for Black, Indigenous, people of color.

Black – in a 2020 change to our practice, should be capitalized when referring to race. If deciding whether to use *African American* or *Black*, consider context, as *Black* and *African American* have different meanings and are not interchangeable.

board of trustees – capitalized when using the formal name, *Bowdoin College Board of Trustees*, and when *Board of Trustees* needs to be understood to be referring to Bowdoin; otherwise lowercase. Individual members may be referred to as trustees (and not capitalized) or board members or members of the board.

Bowdoin College Museum of Art – preferred use is to list Bowdoin’s art museum using its complete, official name: *Bowdoin College Museum of Art*. The abbreviation *BCMA* is acceptable on subsequent use but is typically written as *the BCMA*. Do not say *Walker Art Building* unless you are referring specifically to the architectural history of the building or to the building itself. *Walker Art Museum* is never correct. The word *Museum* may be capitalized when it is a clear reference to the BCMA; the College has more than one museum.

Bowdoin wordmark – the Bowdoin College wordmark identifies a publication, sign, or merchandise as an official communication from Bowdoin College. For authorized artwork contact the Office of Communications and Public Affairs at 207-725-3253.

Bricks, the – refers to the six residence halls Appleton Hall, Hyde Hall, Coleman Hall, Maine Hall, Moore Hall, and Winthrop Hall.

brown – lowercase in reference to race or ethnic designation.

Buck Center – the proper name is *Peter Buck Center for Health and Fitness*; note that *the* is not a part of the official name of the facility even though it appears on the building’s exterior signage. If “the” appears before the name, it should not be capitalized (*the Buck Center*). *Buck Center* is acceptable, especially in subsequent use and informal uses.

buildings/places – campus building names are capitalized when the formal name is used (*Hawthorne-Longfellow Library*, *Studzinski Recital Hall*), but not necessarily with informal references (i.e., *the library*, *the recital hall*). Exceptions can be made—e.g., referencing the *Museum* or the *Library*, but usage should be consistent throughout a given communication. When identifying a building by name, use the full name and do not abbreviate unless in a subsequent mention (*Visual Arts Center*, not *VAC*; *Hawthorne-Longfellow Library*, not *H-L Library* and definitely not *H&L Library* or *H&L*—there is no *and* in the building’s name). For a list of official building names, see the [Campus and Buildings page](#) online. It is usually correct to eliminate *the* as part of building names: *Studzinski Recital Hall*, not *the Studzinski Recital Hall*. Do not identify a building as *new* if it has been open for a year or more.

bulleted lists – a vertical list is best set off by a complete grammatical sentence followed by a colon. Listed items have ending punctuation only if the items are complete sentences. If the listed items are numbered or bulleted, the line item begins with a capital letter.

Joe had three ways he could “Commute Another Way”:

1. Carpool with Mary
2. Ride his bike
3. Walk

Joe had three ways he could “Commute Another Way”:

carpool with Mary
ride his bike
walk

Joe had three ways he could “Commute Another Way”:

1. He could carpool with Mary.
2. He could ride his bike.
3. He could walk.

If a vertical list does not begin with a complete sentence followed by a colon, then the entire list should be treated as a sentence. Listed items may be set off by numbers but begin with a lowercase letter and end with either a comma or semicolon. The entire list ends with a period.

Joe’s three ways to “Commute Another Way” are

1. to carpool with Mary,
2. to ride his bike, and
3. to walk.

See also *lists, run-in*.

C – when referring to a grade, is not set off with quotation marks or any other special punctuation. It stands on its own. For plurals, no apostrophe is used except in the case of letters that might otherwise be confusing (*Bs* is correct; *A’s* is correct so as not to be confused with the word *As*, for example).

capitalization – titles that are written alone or that follow a person’s name should not be capitalized. When a title precedes a person’s name, however, it is often—but not always—correct to capitalize it.

Correct: *Safa Zaki, president of Bowdoin College; Mary Smith, assistant professor of linguistics; she is a trustee*

Correct: *President Safa Zaki; Assistant Professor of Linguistics Mary Smith; trustee Jane Jones*

Incorrect: *Joseph R. Biden, President of the United States; Mary Smith, Assistant Professor of Linguistics; she is a Trustee*

Bowdoin’s style makes exceptions for *College* and *Commencement* and other events (*Reunion Weekend*, etc.) and uses title style in certain formal uses and in some display type. Please ask if you have any questions.

See *titles* section for more information.

Career Exploration and Development – With the renaming of this department, use *Career Exploration and Development* as the proper name of the office, which can be abbreviated on subsequent use as CXD. If not using the official name, it is acceptable to refer to the “career planning office” or “career planning at Bowdoin,” and doing so is preferable to referring to “career exploration and development at Bowdoin” as a general term rather than the name of the office itself.

cell phone – two words, no hyphen; *mobile phone* or *smartphone* (one word) are more current, though cell phone is still acceptable. “Mobile” is the preferred term and the term we use on Bowdoin business cards and stationery.

centuries – and other numerical designations of a period are lowercased, unless there is a designation of a proper name. References to centuries are hyphenated when used as adjectives, otherwise not (*nineteenth-century literature, literature of the nineteenth century*). The century in question should be spelled out—*twenty-first century*, not *21st century*.

chair, chairman, chairwoman – Bowdoin uses *chair* for the head of a committee or board, rather than *chairman*, *chairwoman*, or *chairperson*. An exception here is in writing about someone whose official title is or was *chairman*, *chairwoman*, or *chairperson*, in which case you use the title they actually hold or held. See also *co prefix*.

class identification – refer to *first-year students*, *sophomores*, *juniors*, and *seniors*, rather than referring to freshmen, lowerclassmen, or upperclassmen. All are lowercased. Please note that *upperclass* does not designate all classes besides first-years; it designates juniors and seniors, which means that its use should be limited. Because there are many more distinctions or policies that affect first-year students only, versus those that affect juniors and seniors but not sophomores and first-year students, exceptions exist; e.g., *upperclass housing* has long been used by the College to indicate any housing that is not for first-years. If there is a way to express the idea in question without misusing *upperclass*, that is preferred.

class year – capitalized when referring to a specific class, *Class of 2004*; for class year designation, use the last two digits of the person's class year with an apostrophe indicating the missing first digits, e.g., *John Smith '95*; references from the founding of the College to 100 years before the present first-year class should include the entire year (*Calvin Stowe 1824*, *Alfred Kinsey 1916*, *Donovan Lancaster '27*); it is also permissible and sometimes more clear to say *Calvin Stowe of the Class of 1824*.

Class years are preceded by open apostrophes ('95, not '95). Possessives with class years are written *Ned Horton '82's* (so sentences that include them can often benefit from a rewording). For married couples, place the class year next to the name of the alumna or alumnus: *Bob '92 and Clare Woolworth*; *Susan '85 and Todd Graves '86*, etc. If the person has a class year and a parent designation, the parent year designation follows the class year, with a comma between them: *Ned Horton '82, P'15*. This can get particularly clunky when parents are both alumni, like *Susan '85, P'12 and Todd Graves '86, P'12*. Note an exception here to our general comma rule in that the parent designation is not followed by a comma. Honorary degrees are treated similarly: *Anthony Doerr '95, H'17*.

As a general rule, alumni remain members of the class they matriculated with, no matter what year they earned their degree.

co prefix – closed in most uses—coequal, coauthor, coeditor, coordinate, cooperation, coworker, and so on—but hyphenated when closing results in confusion for the reader (e.g., co-op, co-opt). A recent change is to include *co-chair* as one of these confusing words, even though Merriam-Webster does not hyphenate it. When possible, use *chair* instead, even if there are multiple chairs.

Note: Some official titles exist that do not adhere to this rule.

Coastal Studies Center – see *Schiller Coastal Studies Center*.

coed – short for coeducational, no hyphen; used primarily in historical contexts as a noun to mean a female student or as an adjective (*Bowdoin went coed in 1971*).

collective nouns – single entities that are made up of more than one thing or person (*the government*, *faculty*, *administration*, *family*) are generally treated as singular nouns and take a singular verb (although in British use, they are generally treated as plural). Where people often get into trouble is choosing a plural pronoun to replace the singular collective noun (*The faculty wanted its voice heard*, not *The faculty wanted their voice heard*).

There are cases where these collective terms should be treated as plural nouns. If the reference clearly implies multiple people acting individually, rather than as an entity, it is correct to use the plural references—for instance, when referring to the faculty as a group of individuals rather than a collective body. You wouldn't say *The faculty determine its own office hours*. It would be better to rewrite the sentence to make it clear we are talking about more than one faculty member: *Members of the faculty determine their own office hours*.

College – is capitalized when it is a specific reference to Bowdoin; lowercase when used alone in reference to other institutions or to college in general (*For many students, college is a time of exploration.*).

College House – the correct way to refer to the student residences that are part of the College House system in Bowdoin’s residential life program; do not use the term *social house* when referring to any College House.

colon, spaces after – despite what people may have learned in school, one space, not two, follows punctuation marks such as the colon, period, and exclamation point.

commas – Bowdoin uses the serial comma (also called the Oxford comma), a comma separating all elements of a series of three or more elements, including the one before a final conjunction (*We have a choice of copper, silver, or gold.*). When the serial elements are long and complex or involve internal punctuation, they are separated by semicolons. Exceptions to this rule exist when AP style is being followed, such as in press releases, but should be consistent elsewhere.

Commas (and periods) almost always fall inside quotation marks:

Correct: *He wrote the poems “Summer,” “Winter,” and “Spring.”*

Incorrect: *He wrote the poems “Summer”, “Winter”, and “Spring”.* (You will see this style in British usage, but it is incorrect in our style.)

Commas are also used in numbers of 1,000 and higher.

A word, abbreviation, phrase, or clause that is in apposition to a noun (provides an explanatory equivalent) is normally set off by commas if it is nonrestrictive—if it can be omitted without obscuring the identity of the noun to which it refers. (*Ursula’s husband, Jann, is also a writer.*) If the word or phrase is restrictive and provides essential information about the noun to which it refers no commas should appear. (*Ryan’s sister Jill is coming to the party. Ryan has more than one sister.*) When it’s unknown whether it’s restrictive (you don’t know and can’t find out how many sisters Ryan has), use the commas.

Commencement – capitalize when referring to Bowdoin’s ceremony and *Commencement Weekend*; lowercase in generic references. *You can purchase commencement items through the campus bookstore; photos from Commencement are available on the Bowdoin website.*

committees – proper names are capitalized (*Committee on Governance and Faculty Affairs*); informal references are not (*faculty affairs committee*).

common good – lowercase in most cases; this is consistent with President Joseph McKeen’s 1802 declaration that “...*literary institutions are founded and endowed for the common good.*...” It is capitalized in instances where it is used in an official title, as in the *Joseph McKeen Center for the Common Good*, and the *Common Good Award*.

compound words – some are open, some closed, and some hyphenated, so it is best to review the compound in question on a case-by-case basis. Some common Bowdoin terms and their preferred spelling:

service learning course (no hyphen)

study abroad course (no hyphen)

off-campus study (with hyphen)

comprise – a transitive verb, which means it must have an object and it may not be used in the passive voice. It is incorrect, although seen so often that it is likely changing, to write that something *is comprised of* something else.

Correct: *The group comprises juniors and seniors.* or *The group is composed of...* or *made up of...*

Incorrect: *The group is comprised of juniors and seniors.*

course titles – titles of courses taught at Bowdoin are written in upper and lowercase letters. For example: *Several members of the department teach Principles of Microeconomics.* Course names have historically not been formatted in any way, either by italics or with quotation marks. Now that many, if not most, course names are more title style (such as *ARTH 3800. The Thing*) than level style (*Intermediate French*), we changed in 2020 to italics in running text to avoid confusing our readers, so that a course would be styled as *ARTH 3800: The Thing* or just *The Thing*. Course names in listings in Courseleaf or on department pages will still be styled without italics, and when courses are named in level style, they can be styled without italics, but do not mix the two styles.

Coursework – one word, not two.

COVID-19 – This term emerged with the pandemic, and there are lots of styles and spellings used. Bowdoin chose to use Merriam-Webster's version over a lowercase covid-19 or Covid-19. It is incorrect to call this disease "the coronavirus," since that is a general term that encompasses multiple viruses.

cum laude – Latin title, meaning *with honors*; set lowercase in italics. At Bowdoin, this is referred to as *Latin honors* and is conferred on graduating students whose GPAs place them in the top 20 percent of the graduating class.

curriculum – the single form of the word; *curricula* is plural.

curriculum vitae – (plural: *curricula vitae*), a summary of one's personal history and professional qualifications. An allowable short form is *vita* (plural: *vitae*), or just *CV* (no periods; plural: *CVs*); should not be italicized.

D – when referring to a grade, is not set off with quotation marks or any other special punctuation. It stands on its own. For plurals, no apostrophe is used except in the case of letters that might otherwise be confusing (*Bs* is correct; *A's* is correct so as not to be confused with the word *As*, for example).

dangling modifiers – a participle that has no syntactical relationship with the nearest subject is called a *dangling participle*.

Correct: *Stepping up to the plate, I swung at the ball and the umpire called, "Strike three!"*

Incorrect: *Stepping up to the plate, the ball was missed, and the umpire called "Strike three."*
Unless you mean that the umpire stepped up to the plate to make his call, technically here "ball" is the subject of "stepping."

Sometimes dangling modifiers are infinitive phrases:

Correct: *To catch a big fish, you must use the right kind of bait.*

Incorrect: *To catch a big fish, the right kind of bait is important.*

They may also be prepositional or adverbial phrases or clauses with an understood subject and verb.

Correct: *Her work as a professor of economics involves...* (now the modifier directly describes her work) OR *As she is a professor of economics, her work...* (separate subjects)

Incorrect: As a professor of economics, her work involves international research. “Work” is not a professor. Either add the correct subject to the phrase or move it.

dashes – see entries for *em-dash* and *en-dash* for more information. Do not put spaces between words and dashes. The following examples are correct: *His children—Tom, Dick, and Mary—all became doctors. The exhibition is on view September 1–October 31. Hours of operation: 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m.* In MacOS, an en-dash is made with option-hyphen, an em dash with option-shift-hyphen. In Windows, an en-dash is made with Alt-0150 and an em-dash with Alt-0151.

data – a plural noun that usually takes a singular verb. For calculations and data-driven research, retain the plural verb if that is preferred usage in the discipline. For more general use, the singular is acceptable.

database – one word, no hyphen.

dates – use commas when including the date in a standard format (*Sept. 16, 2020*), but not in the format *16 September 2020*. Also do not use a comma when only the month and year are given (*September 2016*).

When denoting a period of time, do not use a dash in place of *from* or *between* (Not *from Sept. 16–22*, but *from Sept. 16 to Sept. 22*; if you use a dash it’s just *Sept. 16–22*). Avoid using *th* when denoting a date (use *Sept. 16*, not *Sept. 16th*); *ordinals* (with the *th*) are primarily spoken. When listing a span of years, Bowdoin style prefers listing the complete beginning and ending year: *2016–2017*, rather than *2016–17* (though the latter is not incorrect if it must be used due to space constraints). Note the connecting punctuation is an **en dash**, which is not surrounded by spaces.

Note that, in running text, a comma will come before and after the year in a sentence like the following: *Born on January 25, 1882, Virginia Woolf was raised in a remarkable household.*

decades – and other numerical designations of a period are lowercased, unless there is a designation of a proper name. When a number is abbreviated, it takes an apostrophe typed as a reverse single quote (’64); when it is made plural, it does not take an apostrophe (1960s).

decision-making – hyphenated now when used as a noun and as an adjective (*decision-making process, the process of decision-making*).

degrees, punctuation/list of – Bowdoin grants only bachelor of arts degrees (*AB’s*). Even in the science disciplines, its degrees are *bachelor of arts degrees* (never *bachelors*—the degrees may be plural, but the designation isn’t). In the 1960s, Bowdoin had a period in which it awarded master’s degrees; those alumni are designated with a G before their class year.

Periods should be omitted in abbreviations of academic degrees, unless they are required for reasons of tradition or consistency.

correct:

bachelor of arts degree – BA

bachelor of arts degrees – BA’s

bachelor's degrees

master of arts degree – MA

master of arts degrees – MA's

master's degrees

As with abbreviations with periods, the plural of these degrees is made by adding an apostrophe plus s: *PhD's, BA's*.

degree, receipt of – avoid references to a person *receiving* his or her academic degree(s), which sounds passive and does not reflect the work that degree represents. It is better to say he or she *earned* the degree. Also, a degree is earned *at* an institution, not *from* an institution.

degree, indicator – (other relationships, degrees, honors) parents of students and alumni are designated by *P* and the child's class year (*Cynthia Benson P'05*); honorary degree recipients by *H* and the year; graduate school graduates by *G* and the year.

deities – names of deities, whether in monotheistic or polytheistic religions, are capitalized, e.g. *Allah, God, Jehovah*.

departments/offices – department and office names are capitalized when the official name is used (*Department of Art, Office of Admissions*) but not when an informal, generic, or abbreviated name is used (*admissions, athletics, the department*).

Note that, at Bowdoin, the terms *department, program, and major* may not be synonymous. Please check the [Departments and Programs](#) page on the website for correct terminology.

Following is a list of academic departments at Bowdoin: anthropology, art (art history, visual arts), biology, chemistry, classics, computer science, earth and oceanographic science, economics, education, English, German, government and legal studies, history, mathematics, music, philosophy, physics, psychology, religion, Romance languages and literatures, Russian, East European, and Eurasian studies, sociology, and theater and dance.

The following are programs, not departments: Africana studies; Asian studies; biochemistry; cinema studies; environmental studies; gender, sexuality, and women's studies; Latin American studies; and neuroscience.

The following are special areas of study: Arabic, Arctic studies, coastal studies, digital and computational studies, engineering dual-degree options, legal studies, and teaching.

Administrative departments include, for example, athletics, facilities, and information technology.

Administrative divisions at the College include the Division of Student Affairs, the Division of Finance and Administration, and the Division of Development and Alumni Relations.

disabled – *persons with disabilities* is preferred over disabled or handicapped in consideration of College style guidelines, Bowdoin's director of student accessibility, and the Association on Higher Education and Disability.

disinterested – should be reserved for the sense of impartiality; avoid it as a replacement for *uninterested*.

Divisions of the College – see departments/offices.

dorm/dormitory – do not use *dormitory* or *dorm*; the preferred phrase is *residence hall*.

Dr. – Bowdoin does not use *Dr.* as a term of address for professors. Do not use the title of doctor or its abbreviation for someone who has an earned or honorary PhD. Exceptions may be made on occasion for visiting/guest speakers and sparingly in other circumstances.

drop off – such phrases as *drop off*, *pick up*, and *sign in*, when used as instructions, are imperative verbs and should not be hyphenated (*Drop off your registration card at the Office of the Registrar.*). Used to describe a location where an activity takes place, the words are hyphenated (*There is a drop-off box for Federal Express shipments outside the Copy Center.*).

each – as a subject is always singular and takes a singular verb. People sometimes get confused when the subject is modified by a prepositional phrase with a plural object (Each of the students *has* a dining hall pass.). The subject is still “each,” and the verb is still singular.

east – lowercased as a direction but capitalized if referring to a specific geographic location (*the East*; *the East Coast*). Do not spell it out in a street address (*1460 E. Huntington*).

Edwards Center for Art and Dance – see *Robert H. and Blythe Bickel Edwards Center for Art and Dance*.

effect – has two common meanings: a *noun* meaning “anything brought about by a cause or agent; a result” (*The effect of my vote was the termination of his employment.*), or a *verb* meaning “to cause” (to effect a compromise...).

This should not be (but often is) confused with **affect**, which is a verb meaning “to have an influence on; to produce a change.” (*His sentiments did not affect my vote.*)

e.g. – in Roman type (not italics) and always followed by a comma. Abbreviation of *exempli gratia*, which means “for example.” Not to be confused with *i.e.*, which explains more specifically the point you’ve just made (*that is*).

ellipsis – the omission of a word or words from a text. To let the reader know that something has been omitted, we use ellipsis points, or three periods separated by two spaces, to stand in for the omitted text. When the omission occurs within a phrase, the three periods also have spaces on either side. Other punctuation that may help the meaning of the sentence may be used before or after the ellipsis points (commas and semicolons before the ellipsis points; colons after).

When the omission occurs after the end of a sentence, a period (or question mark or exclamation point), which would come after the last word, is followed by three more points, each separated by a space. The sentence immediately preceding the ellipsis points and the one following should each be complete sentences. If a quotation or sentence is intentionally left incomplete, it is followed only by the three dots, omitting the period.

Ellipsis points are not used before or after a block quotation or before or after an obviously incomplete sentence.

email – closed, not hyphenated.

em-dash and en-dash – are so named because they are designed to equal the width of the letters *m* and *n* respectively. In general, an em-dash signifies a break or offset in text, and an en-dash is most often used with numbers. The dashes are not surrounded by spaces.

Correct em-dash: *His children—Tom, Dick, and Mary—all became doctors.*

Incorrect em-dash: *His children — Tom, Dick, and Mary — all became doctors.* (Note: use of the spaces around the em-dash is correct in Associated Press style.)

Correct en-dash: *Commencement Weekend May 26–28*

Incorrect en-dash: *Commencement Weekend May 26 – 28*

In Mac OS, to type an en-dash, use option-hyphen; for an em-dash, use option-shift-hyphen. In Windows, an en-dash is made with Alt-0150 and an em-dash with Alt-0151.

emerita – feminine singular form of the title bestowed on one who has retired from active service, but who has retained her rank or title. It is not italicized. Note that emeritus status may only be conferred by formal vote of the board of trustees.

emeritae – feminine plural form of the title bestowed on those who have retired from active service but retain their ranks or titles; see *emerita* for additional information.

emeriti – masculine plural form of the title bestowed on those who have retired from active service, but retain their ranks or titles; see *emerita* for additional information.

emeritus – masculine singular form of the title bestowed on one who has retired from active service, but who has retained his rank or title; see *emerita* for additional information.

emphasis – To emphasize a phrase or other part of text in running or narrative text, use italics rather than capitals or bold or underline. If there is a nearby use of italics that could be confusing, use bold instead.

en-dash and em-dash – see *em-dash*.

ensure – to make sure or certain; do not use *insure* in its place.

entitled – showing entitlement; does not reference the name of a book, presentation, etc. For that meaning, use *titled*.

Correct: *She wrote a book titled Gone With the Wind.*

Incorrect: *She wrote a book entitled Gone With the Wind.*

Equal Opportunity Employer – the following text is required in all College publications that are likely to be used for recruitment of students or employees:

Bowdoin College complies with applicable provisions of federal and state laws that prohibit unlawful discrimination in employment, admission, or access to its educational or extracurricular programs, activities, or facilities based on race, color, ethnicity, ancestral and national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, age, marital status, place of birth, genetic predisposition, veteran status, or against qualified individuals with physical or mental disabilities on the basis of disability, or any other legally protected statuses.

eras – Bowdoin prefers using CE (*of the Common Era*) and BCE (*before the Common Era*) over AD (*anno Domini, in the year of the Lord*) and BC (*before Christ*); full capitals, no periods. However, either treatment is acceptable as long as it is consistently used within a given publication.

ethnic group designations – *In a change in 2020, Black should be capitalized in reference to race. Both white and brown should be lowercase.*

F – when referring to a grade, is not set off with quotation marks or any other special punctuation. It stands on its own. For plurals, no apostrophe is used except in the case of letters that might otherwise be confusing (*Bs* is correct; *A's* is correct so as not to be confused with the word *As*, for example).

faculty – see *collective nouns*.

fall/autumn – lowercase (*fall semester*) but capitalize if specific (*Fall 2018*).

family – see *collective nouns*.

Family Weekend – the name of the annual fall campus event that was formerly called Parents Weekend.

farther/further – often used interchangeably, but *farther* traditionally refers to physical distance, while *further* is more metaphorical, referring to an extent of time or degree. When you're looking for a word to mean "in addition" or "moreover," however, *further* is the correct choice.

fieldwork – one word, no hyphen.

first-year – Preferred use is as an adjective, such as *first-year student* or *first-year students*, but where this gets repetitive or is otherwise unwieldy, it is acceptable to use the term as a noun (*First-years will arrive on campus at the end of August.*).

freshman/freshmen – avoid the use of these words; use *first-year student* or *first-year students*. Informal use of "first-year" or "first-years" as nouns are acceptable.

From Here – This is the name of Bowdoin's current comprehensive fundraising campaign, launched publicly in February 2020. In running text, it should be treated as capitalized but not italicized: "From Here, Bowdoin's current comprehensive fundraising campaign" or "Bowdoin has raised more than \$300 million so far as part of the From Here campaign." It can also be used, more commonly in a branding capacity than in running text but acceptable in both, as "From Here: The Campaign for Bowdoin" (no period). For use in designed materials, please consult the Office of Communications and Public Affairs.

further/farther – often used interchangeably, but *farther* traditionally refers to physical distance, while *further* is more metaphorical, referring to an extent of time or degree. When you're looking for a word to mean "in addition" or "moreover," however, *further* is the correct choice.

gender – woman/women and man/men are the applicable words in consideration of gender contexts; female and male are the appropriate words in contexts having to do with sex. It is preferable to speak of people in terms of gender in order to avoid complexities involved in assigning sex and, if the context allows, avoid the subject entirely. See below for more specifics.

An individual woman graduate is an alumna; a man is an alumnus. Collectively they are alumni, unless specifically referring to a group of women graduates, in which case, alumnae. In the instance in which a person requests the use of a gender-neutral pronoun, it is acceptable to use the abbreviation "alum," even in writing.

Ideally, a sentence should be recast to eliminate the need for any personal pronoun. See also “he/she.” Avoid the use of he or him as a generic (sexist) pronoun, but don’t resort to s/he or him/her. The easiest way to write around he/she issues is to make the subject of the sentence plural, which enables you to use the non-sexist they/their/them when switching to a pronoun.

Singular they – may also be used when it is preferred by an individual, as can alternative pronouns. To make this clear, it can be helpful to reference the subject’s preference on first use: “Jamie Keller, who uses they/them pronouns, said they were happy to help.”

Nonbinary gender – refers to gender identity that doesn’t fit within the woman/man gender binary. Refer to sons and daughters, mothers and fathers, etc., only as specifically required. Use children, students, parents, families, etc., where possible.

When possible and depending on the context, ask the individual(s) what pronouns they prefer. If a person requests the use of a pronoun that could confuse the reader, you may wish to introduce that on first use: “Jamie Keller, who uses they/them pronouns, said they were happy to help.”

Go U Bears – in keeping with College style, capitalize each of the three words and substitute “U” for you; may be followed by an exclamation point in consideration of usage.

government – see *collective nouns*.

governor – Governor Janet Mills or Gov. Janet Mills; Governor Mills; the governor; Janet Mills, governor of Maine; the Honorable Janet Mills. As a courtesy and in recognition of their high elected offices, former elected officials may still be addressed with their titles: Gov. William King; Governor King; the Honorable William King.

grade point average – may be abbreviated GPA, which, in the plural, is GPAs.

grades – grades include A, A–, B+, B, B–, C+, C, C–, D, F, and Credit/No Credit. All letter grades are written uppercase with no punctuation. The minus sign is an en dash (so called because it is as wide as the lowercase n; type option-hyphen to make an en dash). (See listings for A, B, C, D, and F for more information.)

graduate – definitions include: (transitive verb) to grant a degree, to mark gradations, to arrange or classify; (intransitive) to become a graduate of, to graduate from. A person graduates from (becomes a graduate of) Bowdoin. Don’t use this way: He graduated Bowdoin. The dictionary marks this as colloquial usage, but in fact, Bowdoin graduated him, not the other way around.

Be cautious in referring to Bowdoin alumni as Bowdoin graduates as the College counts many who did not graduate as members of the alumni body.

handicap accessible – better to simply say *accessible*.

handicapped – Avoid. *Persons with disabilities* is the preferred terminology in College style guidelines, with Bowdoin’s director of student accessibility, and according to the Association on Higher Education and Disability.

Hawthorne-Longfellow Library – should not be written as H-L except very informally and never as H&L, but may be referred to as the Library (capitalized) when used as a clear reference to Bowdoin’s primary library facility. However, the College does have more than one library.

he/she – avoid the use of he or him as a generic (sexist) pronoun, but don’t use s/he or him/her. The easiest way to write around he/she issues is to make the subject of the sentence plural, which enables you to use

the nonsexist they/their/them when switching to a pronoun (*All students who hand in their applications...*). It is also acceptable to refer to he and she/him and her in sentences; it just makes them longer (*Each student who hands in his or her application...*) and should be used only when needed, as it can create tedious repetition and an unintended emphasis of gender as binary. Although it has been in the past unacceptable to use a singular subject with a plural pronoun, that is now accepted and is often the easiest way to avoid problems: *Each student who hands in their application on time will receive an answer within a day.*

Note: When writing about a specific person, writers should whenever possible ask the subject what their preferred pronouns are, and then use those pronouns.

headline style capitalization – capitalize all nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs; lowercase most articles, prepositions (except when used adverbially or adjectivally), and typically most conjunctions. Don't capitalize based on the length of the word. Capitalize the first word after a colon, regardless of its part of speech, but use normal headline style for the first word after a dash.

health care – two words, no hyphen.

high school – does not take a hyphen when used as an adjective.

Hispanic – usually a Spanish-speaking person of Latin American origin who lives in the United States. *Latino/a* is used more readily whether or not the person/people in question are Latin American or Latinos in the US. A concentration in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, Hispanic studies language, literature, and culture of the Spanish-speaking world.

historic – as an adjective, preceded by *a* not *an*. It was a historic event. History is also preceded by *a*, not *an*; also, historian, preceded by *a* not *an*. See “a/an” listing for more information.

honor code – capitalize the proper name: the Academic Honor Code but “the honor code”; see *Social Code*.

hyphenation – hyphenate compound adjectives that precede nouns; do not hyphenate compound adjectives that follow nouns; do not hyphenate well-established compound modifiers; do not hyphenate after an adverb ending in *ly*. When in doubt, check this list or the dictionary (this one: <https://www.merriam-webster.com>).

i.e. – in roman type (not italics) and always followed by a comma. Abbreviation of *id est*, which means “that is” or “more specifically.” In using i.e., you're essentially restating something you've just said, perhaps more explicitly. Not to be confused with e.g., which introduces one or more examples.

imperative verbs – such phrases as “drop off,” “pick up,” and “sign in,” when used as instructions, are imperative verbs and should not be hyphenated (Drop off your registration card at the Office of the Registrar). Used to describe a location where an activity takes place, the words are hyphenated (There is a drop-off box for Federal Express shipments outside the Copy Center).

independent study – does not take a hyphen when preceding a noun (independent study projects). Unless being referred to as a specific class, as in Classfinder or the catalogue, it should be lowercase.

indicia – postal permit signifying that postage has been paid. Specific regulations govern the use of postal indicia. To include a printed indicia on your mailing piece, please consult Bowdoin's Office of Communications and Public Affairs and/or the Mail Center. (You cannot just make one of these.)

Indigenous – capitalize in reference to race or ethnicity.

international/foreign – in references to people, use international rather than foreign.

internet – Until recently, capitalized. Now lowercase.

invitations – styles used on formal invitations are frequently discussed due to strong personal preferences. Here are some preferred Bowdoin style guidelines for invitation copy:

Punctuation: Do you end complete sentences with a period? Or do you include no periods at the end of lines? Bowdoin style prefers ending complete sentences with periods. However, what is most important is to be consistent on each invitation. If you punctuate any line with a period, you must punctuate all complete sentences with a period. Otherwise, do not use the period at the end of any sentences. You get the idea.

Dates do include commas. *Tuesday, March 1, 2011, at 2:00 p.m.* includes a comma after the day, the date, and the year.

Times: Use the complete format, such as 1:00 p.m. (not 1 p.m.). Connect times with an en dash with no spaces around the dash: 1:00 p.m.–3:00 p.m. (note p.m. is used with both times). Use “noon” or “midnight” instead of 12:00 p.m. and 12:00 a.m.

RSVP: Do not use periods. Do not preface with “please.” If you are feeling like you really want to say “please” you can say “Please reply by” instead.

Registration: Do not say “advanced registration”; it’s “advance registration” or “register in advance.”

italics – foreign terms, including Latin terms, that have not yet been incorporated into everyday use are italicized. *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary*, and the latest edition of its chief abridgment, *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, are our authorities for determining which words should be italicized.

its/it’s – *its* is the possessive pronoun (along with his and hers). *It’s* is only ever a contraction for the words “it is.” (The College has set its course. It’s going to be a fine day.) *Its’* is never correct.

J-Board/Judicial Board – either is acceptable.

Jr. and Sr. – unnecessary to set off by commas in names, and the *Chicago Manual’s*, the *Associated Press’s*, and Bowdoin’s preferred style is to eliminate the commas. *John Smith Jr.* is correct and preferred style. Other generational suffixes (II or III, for example) are never set off by commas.

Labs – Science faculty often have lab groups who work on research and/or problems for many years over time. Their work becomes categorized under the term known as the lab where the research takes place. At Bowdoin, these labs are known by the names of the professors who run them. These are capitalized to show that they persist over time: *the Dickinson Lab*, *the Horch Lab*, etc.

Latin words and terms – Commonly used words and abbreviations should not be italicized. Because of its use to distinguish a term or wording as incorrect and so to be clear as to be not part of that use, “sic” is italicized. If you have questions about whether a term or word is commonly used enough, please contact us. See also alma mater and Latin honors in this list.

Latina – a Latin American or Hispanic woman. Latino/a is often used whether or not the person/people in question are Latin American or Latinos in the US. Latino/a is acceptable for the collective noun, but the gender-inclusive Latinx is more widely used now.

Latino – a Latin American or Hispanic man; may also be used in the collective noun or adjective form. Latino/a is used more readily whether or not the person/people in question are Latin American or Latinos in the US. Latino/a is acceptable for the collective noun, but the gender-inclusive Latinx is more widely used now.

Latinx – gender-inclusive term referring to a Latin American or Hispanic person or people.

lead – the past tense of *lead* is *led*, not lead.

LGBT – acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender; LGBTIQA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersexed, queer/questioning, allied/asexual) may be used in contexts pertaining to Bowdoin’s Center for Sexuality, Women, and Gender.

Library – see *Hawthorne-Longfellow Library*.

lists, bulleted – a vertical list (as opposed to a run-in list) is best set off by a complete grammatical sentence followed by a colon. Listed items have ending punctuation only if the items are complete sentences. If the listed items are numbered or bulleted, the line item begins with a capital letter.

Joe had three ways he could commute:

1. Carpool with Mary
2. Ride his bike
3. Walk

Joe had three ways he could commute:

carpool with Mary
ride his bike
walk

Joe had three ways he could commute:

He could carpool with Mary.
He could ride his bike.
He could walk.

If a vertical list does not begin with a complete sentence followed by a colon, then the entire list should be treated as a sentence. Listed items may be set off by numbers but begin with a lowercase letter and end with either a comma or semicolon. The entire list ends with a period.

Joe’s three ways to commute are

1. to carpool with Mary,
2. to ride his bike,
3. to walk.

Exceptions may be made with respect to punctuation of lists in display type or specific graphic design.

lists, run-in – short, simple lists are usually run into the text rather than set off as a vertical list with bullets. Numbers or letters that set off the parts of the list are enclosed in parentheses, and the parts are set off by commas or semicolons.

The Smiths' European tour will take them to (1) London, (2) Paris, (3) Rome, and (4) Madrid.

The performance series will include (a) *Bell, Book, and Candle*; (b) *Suddenly, Last Summer*; and (c) *Farewell, My Lovely*.

log-in – hyphenated as a noun; two words (log in) as a verb.

-ly – when used to form a compound adverb preceding a noun, do not hyphenate. Correct: It was a highly acclaimed book. Note: AP hyphenates this use, so you will see it in newspapers, but Chicago does not.

magna cum laude – Latin title, meaning with great honors; set lowercase in italics. At Bowdoin, this is referred to as “Latin honors” and is conferred on graduating students whose GPAs place them between the top 2 percent and top 8 percent of the graduating class.

majors – lowercase subjects, except those that use a proper noun (English, Latin American studies, biology). For a complete listing of departmental, program, coordinate, and interdisciplinary majors see the [Departments and Programs page online](#).

mankind – substitute people or humanity unless used in a quotation.

midcoast – as an adjective, as in *midcoast Maine*, it is one word and begins with a lowercase m. When referring to the geographical region (as a noun), *the Midcoast*, it is one word and begins with a capital M. The only time the term is two words (mid coast or Mid Coast) is when it is the chosen spelling of a proper name of something, as in *Mid Coast Hospital*.

midnight – use just the word without a number; not 12:00 a.m., not 12:00 A.M., not 12 midnight.

minors – for a complete and current list of minors offered at Bowdoin see the [Departments and Programs page online](#).

misplaced modifiers – these are instances of modifying words or phrases placed in such a way that their antecedent words are not clear. When we are combining a number of ideas in one sentence, it is easy to lose track of modifiers and antecedents. The result is awkward writing that confuses the reader.

Combine these ideas in one sentence:

Joe Alumnus worked in the insurance business in Boston for many years.
He moved to Maine in 1960 to take up mussel farming.

Correct:

Joe Alumnus worked in insurance in Boston until 1960, when he moved to Maine to take up mussel farming.

OR

Joe Alumnus began mussel farming in Maine in 1960 after moving here from Boston, where he had worked in the insurance business.

Incorrect:

Joe Alumnus worked until 1960 in the insurance business in Boston, when he moved to Maine to take up mussel farming.

“When” refers to time, not place. The closest noun preceding “when” (its immediate antecedent) is “Boston.”

mobile phone – more current term than “cell phone”; two words.

mobile site – lowercase.

multi – as a prefix does not take a hyphen.

multicultural – of, relating to, reflecting, or adapted to diverse cultures.

Museum of Art – preferred use is to list Bowdoin’s art museum using its complete, official name: *Bowdoin College Museum of Art*. The abbreviation *BCMA* is acceptable on subsequent use but is typically written as *the BCMA*. Do not say *Walker Art Building* unless you are referring specifically to the architectural history of the building or to the building itself. *Walker Art Museum* is never correct. The word *Museum* may be capitalized when it is a clear reference to the BCMA; the College has more than one museum. If referring to the terrace, write *Terrace, Walker Art Building, Bowdoin College Museum of Art*. Technically, the terrace is an architectural element of the Walker Art Building.

names – members of the Bowdoin community may use names, known as their lived name, that are different from their legal name. In writing about anyone, be sure that you know what their preference is for use, particularly in any public-facing use.

Native American – many who trace their roots to the aboriginal peoples of the Americas prefer American Indian to Native American, and in certain historical works Indian may be more appropriate. Context and the voice represented by the author matters. When using “Native” to refer to race or ethnicity, capitalize. In other uses (He was a native New Englander.), lowercase.

NCAA – stands for National Collegiate Athletic Association; divisions use Roman numerals, not Arabic. Bowdoin is a Division III school.

NESCAC – stands for the New England Small College Athletic Conference. Bowdoin is a founding member of the eleven-member conference. Other members are Amherst, Bates, Colby, Connecticut, Hamilton, Middlebury, Trinity, Tufts, Wesleyan, and Williams. Of the eleven, Tufts and Wesleyan are actually universities.

new – frequently used to describe new programs or the campus’s most recently constructed (or renovated) buildings but should be used sparingly after a building or program is more than a year old.

non – as a prefix does not usually take a hyphen, although you may use one to avoid puzzling or misleading forms (non-native is much easier to read than nonnative). To join it to a two-word unhyphenated phrase, use an en-dash (non–music major).

non-American English spelling – for consistency’s sake, Bowdoin editors will change non-American English spelling to American English spelling (change *colour* to *color*, for example), except in material being quoted directly (Shakespeare wrote *Love’s Labour’s Lost*) and in off-campus study materials, which will retain the non-American spelling. Bowdoin editors will also change non-American punctuation to American punctuation.

noon – use the word without a number; not 12:00 p.m., not 12:00 P.M., not 12 noon.

north – lowercased as a direction but capitalized if referring to a specific geographic location. Do not spell it out in a street address (1460 N. Wabash).

numbers – spell out whole numbers of less than 100, as well as those ending in hundred, thousand, million, etc. Any number that begins a sentence is spelled out.

Ordinal numbers (those that show order) follow the same rules as cardinal (counting) numbers: He was ranked 125th in a class of 127. He batted third in the order. Do not use ordinal numbers in dates: The concert will be performed on September 25 (not September 25th).

Percentages always use numerals (except at the beginning of a sentence) and are followed by the percent symbol in scientific or statistical copy; in other types of writing, the word “percent” is spelled out. Exceptions can be made in graphs or charts where necessary for space.

object pronouns – many people—especially those who are diligent about referring humbly to themselves in the subject of a sentence (Mary and I ate lunch)—get confused when using pronouns and especially multiple pronouns as objects:

Correct: *She gave it to Mary and me.*

Incorrect: *She gave it to Mary and I.*

off-campus – hyphenated as an adjective preceding a noun; otherwise left open (*He lives off campus.*)

OK – seldom used in formal communication, but when used, it is spelled this way and not *okay*.

online – one word, no hyphen.

on-campus – hyphenated as an adjective preceding a noun; otherwise left open (*She lives on campus.*)

organizations – the official name of an organization is capitalized, but it is preferable that any informal or abbreviated form of the name is lowercased (Bowdoin Chamber Choir, but chamber choir).

parentheses – (If an entire sentence exists within parentheses, the period falls inside the final bracket.) If a parenthetical phrase ends a sentence, the period falls outside, (like this). A question mark falls within the parentheses only when the question is part of the parenthetical phrase. A comma, semicolon, or colon comes after the parentheses are closed.

Parents Weekend – the former name of the annual fall campus event now called Family Weekend. If the older name is ever referenced note that it is spelled with no apostrophe, before or after the s. This is treated as a distributive noun—a weekend for or about parents. A similar example is Veterans Day. (But, Presidents’ Day.)

part-time – hyphenated preceding a noun; otherwise open (*She works part time.*)

parallel construction – every element of a parallel series must be a functional match of the others (word, phrase, clause, sentence) and serve the same grammatical function in the sentence (e.g., noun, verb, adjective, adverb).

Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum – may be referred to as the Arctic Museum; housed in the John and Lile Gibbons Center for Arctic Studies.

percentages – spell out percent (*10 percent*) in running text, but use the numeral (unless the percentage starts a sentence). Do not use % except in scientific or statistical use or in graphic elements, as necessary.

period, spaces after – one space, not two, follows punctuation that ends a sentence, whether it be a period, question mark, exclamation point, or quotation mark. The habit of putting two spaces after the sentence-ending punctuation is a leftover from the days of typewriters and is no longer necessary.

persons with disabilities – preferred terminology rather than *disabled* or *handicapped* in consideration of College style guidelines, Bowdoin’s director of student accessibility, and the Association on Higher Education and Disability.

pick up – such phrases as “drop off,” “pick up,” and “sign in,” when used as instructions, are imperative verbs and should not be hyphenated (*Pick up your ticket at the box office.*). Used to describe a location where an activity takes place or as a noun, “drop off” is hyphenated (*There is a drop-off box for Federal Express shipments outside the Copy Center.*) and “pickup” is closed.

please – politeness matters, but use “please” sparingly in instructions and requests, simply because they add up quickly and become repetitive. For instance: “Please fill out section one before mailing. Please contact the office for more information. If you have technical questions, please call 725-3000.” Don’t say, “Please RSVP”; because the abbreviation is for the French “repondez s’il vous plait” (which translates to “reply, please”), it is redundant. If you want to use “please” in that context, say “please reply” instead of “please RSVP.”

plurals – in almost all cases, nouns and proper names are made plural by adding a simple *s* or an *es*. Abbreviations with periods, lowercase letters used as nouns, and capitalized letters that would be confusing if *s* were added alone, take an apostrophe and *s* to form the plural (PhD’s, x’s and y’s, SOS’s).

Proper names are rendered in the plural in the same way—by adding *s* or *es* (Martins, Joneses). The few exceptions are French, Spanish, and Greek names that become too unwieldy with the additional *s/es* (the sixteen King Louises; the Velasquezes, Xerxeses) in which case you make no change to the name or rewrite the sentence.

An apostrophe plus *s* is never added to make the plural of a personal name.

p.m., P.M. – in time designations, use a.m. and p.m. (lowercase with periods) for running text; use A.M. and P.M. (small capital letters) in other places such as posters, formal programs, and invitations.

Polar Bears – capitalize when it is being used in specific reference to Bowdoin athletes, students, or alumni.

policymaker – one word.

pore – to look intently at something is to *pore over it*, not *pour over it*.

possessives – most singular nouns are made possessive with the addition of an apostrophe and the letter *s* (the child’s toy). Plural nouns, with a few exceptions, are made possessive by simply adding the apostrophe (the puppies’ tails).

The general rule extends to proper nouns, including names ending in *s*, *x*, or *z*, in both singular and plural forms, as well as letters and numbers (singular, Kansas’s legislature; plural, the Lincolns’ marriage).

Words and names ending in an unpronounced *s* form the possessive in the usual way—with the addition of an apostrophe and an *s* (Descartes’s three dreams). Proper classical names of two or more syllables that end in an *eez* sound form the possessive in the usual way (Euripides’s tragedies).

Some exceptions: When the singular form of a noun ending in *s* is the same as the plural, the possessives of both are formed by the addition of an apostrophe only (politics’ true meaning, economics’ forerunners). The same rule applies when the name of a place or organization is a plural form ending in *s* (the United States’ role).

pre – as a prefix, does not usually take a hyphen. An en-dash links it to a multi-word compound (pre–Civil War)

predicate nominative – people are often confused by the use of pronouns in predicate-nominative constructions, where a second subject in a sentence follows the verb. The second subject should still be treated as a subject, not an object (*It is I*, rather than *It is me*. *John is taller than I* [am], rather than *John is taller than me*). Since this can sound stuffy and a bit stilted, we generally recommend writing the sentence differently if possible.

prefixes – a detailed hyphenation guide for compound words formed with prefixes can be found in *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

president – President Safa Zaki; President Zaki; the president; Safa Zaki, president of Bowdoin College. Lowercase when expressed as “president of Bowdoin College Safa Zaki” or “the president of Bowdoin College, Safa Zaki.” As a courtesy and in recognition of their high elected offices, former elected officials may still be addressed with their titles: President Pierce, President Franklin Pierce, the Honorable Franklin Pierce.

professor – when formally identifying a member of the faculty, always use an official title (Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, etc.). When referencing a faculty member more informally, and using “professor” in place of Mr., Mrs., Ms., Dr., etc., it is acceptable to use simply “professor” (*I learned a great deal in Professor Smith’s class*; *The History of Coastal Maine is taught by Assistant Professor Mary Smith*). Because of sensitivities around rank, it is best to either use the exact title or none, but student writing and quotes may refer to the generic “professor” title, and that is acceptable. Bowdoin avoids the use of “Prof.” as an abbreviation.

programs, academic – see the [Departments and Programs page online](#) for more information.

programs, capitalization – as with departments, program names are capitalized when the official name is used (*Environmental Studies Program, Asian Studies Program*), but not when some other form of the name is used (*environmental studies, Asian studies*).

proper name – in news and formal writing, refer to an individual’s full name—first, middle initial/name (if known to be preferred by the individual), last name—in the first written instance; use only the last name thereafter. Exceptions are permissible when different individuals having the same last name appear together in a document or when the tone/context calls for a more informal approach and first names are appropriate. Aim for consistency in treating all references to different individuals in the same manner in a given publication.

Note: When writing about a specific person, writers should whenever possible ask the subject what their preferred full name is, and then use that name. See *names*.

public events – standard wording for admission to public events that have no admission charge is “Open to the public free of charge.”

Quad, quadrangle – the Quad (uppercase Q, abbreviated from quadrangle) refers specifically to Bowdoin’s main quadrangle. Use the full word quadrangle (lowercase) as a generic term, or Quadrangle or Quad (uppercase) when referring to another named quadrangle (the Osher Quadrangle, the Coe Quad). Do not use “Quad” alone to refer to any other than the main quadrangle.

quotations, formatting – quotations may be formatted in text in one of two ways: in block style without quotation marks or run in—within the text itself and enclosed in quotation marks. In general, longer quotations (eight or ten lines or more) are set off in blocks. Shorter quotations are run in.

If a quotation is syntactically part of the sentence, it should begin with a lowercase letter, even if it is a complete sentence in its own right (Benjamin Franklin admonishes us to “plough deep while sluggards sleep.”) When the quotation is not dependent on the rest of the sentence, it begins with a capital letter and is set off by punctuation (As Franklin advised, “Plough deep while sluggards sleep.”).

quotation marks – periods, commas, and exclamation marks ending a quoted statement fall within the final quotation mark. Semicolons and colons fall outside. A question or exclamation mark falls within the quotes only when the question/exclamation is part of the quotation.

résumé – accents if you’re referring to your CV.

reunion – capitalize the word Reunion only when referencing a specific Bowdoin Reunion, e.g. Reunion Weekend, 50th Reunion.

Robert H. and Blythe Bickel Edwards Center for Art and Dance – note “the” is not part of the official name of the building; may be referred to Edwards Center for Art and Dance, or Edwards Center in informal, internal use.

RSVP – do not precede with “please.” RSVP is an abbreviation for the French “repondez, s’il vous plait” (“reply, please”); therefore, adding “please” is redundant. Bowdoin style prefers RSVP without periods. Or consider writing “Please reply…” or “Please respond…” instead.

salutations – If the salutation uses “Dear” do not use a comma before the name. If it uses “Hello” or “Hi” or “Good day” then use a comma. After the name, you may use either a comma or a dash, but a dash often works best, especially if a comma was already used. A colon is not usually used after a salutation.

SAT – SATs; Scholastic Aptitude Test.

scientific paper titles – titles of scientific papers are dealt with the same way that other paper titles are, which is headline style, when they are referenced in nonscientific journals or other ways.

Schiller Coastal Studies Center – occupies a 118-acre coastal site that is twelve miles from campus on Orr’s Island; offers the Bowdoin Marine Science Semester each fall, and interdisciplinary teachings and research. (Note: official name is *Schiller Coastal Studies Center*.)

scholar-athlete – hyphenated noun phrase.

scholar in residence – no hyphens.

senator – Senator Susan Collins or Sen. Susan Collins; Senator Collins; the senator; Susan Collins, senator from Maine; the Honorable Susan Collins. As a courtesy and in recognition of their high elected offices, former elected officials may still be addressed with their titles: Sen. George Mitchell; Senator Mitchell; the Honorable George Mitchell.

Sr. – not preceded by a comma; see listing for “Jr.”

she/he – avoid the use of he or him as a generic (sexist) pronoun, but don’t resort to s/he or him/her. The easiest way to write around he/she issues is to make the subject of the sentence plural, which enables you to use the non-sexist they/their/them when switching to a pronoun (*All students who hand in their applications...*). It is also perfectly acceptable to refer to he and she/him and her in sentences; it just makes them longer (*Each student who hands in his or her application...*).

In using the singular they intentionally, it is acceptable to reference the singular subject in conjunction with a plural pronoun, e.g., *Each student who hands in their application...*

sign in – such phrases as “drop off,” “pick up,” and “sign in,” when used as instructions, are imperative verbs and should not be hyphenated (*Sign in at the front desk when you arrive.*). Used to describe a location where an activity takes place, the words are hyphenated (*There is a drop-off box for Federal Express shipments outside the Copy Center.*).

slash, backslash – a short, diagonal line used as a punctuation mark. A backslash (/) is used to separate words (and/or) or numbers in dates (5/31/08) or fractions (1/2). There are no spaces between the word or number and the slash.

Correct: The photograph shows the area surrounding Thorne Hall/Coles Tower.

Incorrect: The photograph shows the area surrounding Thorne Hall / Coles Tower.

smartphone – one word, no hyphen.

Social Code – capitalized as its proper name.

Social Security number – lowercase the n but capitalize all three when used in an abbreviation (SSN).

socioeconomic class – no hyphen, closed.

south – lowercased as a direction but capitalized if referring to a specific geographic location (the South). Do not spell it out in a street address (1460 S. Hacker).

spaces after a period – one space, not two, follows punctuation that ends a sentence, whether it be a period, question mark, exclamation point, or quotation mark. One space also follows the colon. The habit of putting two spaces after the sentence-ending punctuation is a leftover from the days of typewriters, and is incorrect.

spelling – questions about spelling, including compound words, hyphenation with prefixes, formation of plural, tenses, past and past participle forms, etc., are often answered in the dictionary. Bowdoin’s preference for the sake of consistency is *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary* and the latest edition of its chief abridgment, *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*.

sports divisions/meets – Division III, Region I, regionals, Easterns, nationals, NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association), NESCAC (New England Small College Athletic Conference).

spring – lowercase (spring semester, spring break), but capitalize specific semesters (Spring 2019).

state-of-the-art – hyphenated as an adjective, otherwise not (*The facilities are state of the art.*).

states – names are always spelled out in text when standing alone and when following the name of a town or city (except in lists, tables, notes, bibliographies, and indexes). If abbreviations must be used in text, use the two-digit postal codes.

State names, when used as a qualifier for a city/town name, are surrounded by commas: *He is a Portland, Maine, native.*

stationary/stationery – stationary with an *a* means “standing still”; stationery with an *e* is the paper you use to write letters.

student-athlete – hyphenated, one word.

students – are *first-year students, sophomores, juniors, and seniors*, not *freshmen* and not *upperclassmen* or *lowerclassmen*. Students are *women* and *men*, not *girls* and *boys*, and athletic teams follow suit, e.g., *men's ice hockey* and *women's volleyball*.

subject-verb agreement – making the subject and verb agree when they are close together is generally not a problem. When words (especially other nouns) come between them, however, it can create confusion.

Compound subjects connected by “and” are treated as plural. (*Martin's skill as a negotiator and tact as a manager won him the promotion.*) When compound subjects are connected by “or” or “nor,” make the verb agree with the nearest part of the subject. (*A ticket or two coupons are required.*)

Most indefinite pronouns are considered singular: “anybody,” “anyone,” “each,” “either,” “everybody,” “everyone,” “everything,” “neither,” “none,” “no one,” “someone,” “something.” In speech and informal writing, some of these may take a plural verb, but in formal communications, they almost always take a singular verb. “None” and “neither” always take a singular verb. “All,” “any,” and “some” can be either singular or plural depending on the noun or pronoun they refer to.

Collective nouns should be treated as singular, unless the meaning is clearly plural.

summa cum laude – Latin title, meaning with highest honors; set lowercase in italics. At Bowdoin, this is referred to as “Latin honors” and is conferred on students whose GPAs are in the top 2 percent of the graduating class.

summer – lowercase (summer study).

teams – Not capitalized. For a complete and current listing of varsity teams, club sports, and intramural sports go to <http://athletics.bowdoin.edu/landing/index>.

telephone numbers – written with a hyphen after the area code and no parentheses, periods, slashes, or other punctuation. The telephone number for Bowdoin College is 207-725-3000. While not incorrect, the following phone number styles do not adhere to Bowdoin style and should be avoided: (207) 725-3000, 207.725.3000. The number one should not be used to precede the area code.

tense – when quoting an individual in a written publication, including news reporting, use the past tense, e.g., *she said*, not *she says*.

tenure and tenure-track – Faculty members have tenure, or at any earlier stage can be tenure-track faculty or nontenure-track faculty. If they are referred to as *faculty who are tenure-track*, that term is also hyphenated. If the reference is *faculty who are on a tenure track*, then there is no hyphen. After they have been granted tenure, faculty are *tenured*.

that/which – use *that* to introduce a restrictive clause—a clause that is essential to the meaning of the sentence. In general, the word *that* used in this context does not take commas. (*I have a car that has two doors.*) Use *which* (set off by commas) to introduce a nonrestrictive clause, or one that can be removed from the sentence without making it inaccurate. (*My car, which has two doors, is blue.*) If you are referring to a person, use *who* or *whom* (or *whose*) to introduce the restrictive clause.

that/who – *who* is the only relative pronoun that declines: *who* (nominative), *whom* (objective), *whose* (possessive); normally refers to a person and can be used in the first, second, or third person; that can also be used to refer to a person in the first, second, or third person, however *who/whom* tends to lend greater smoothness.

theater – not *theatre*, except in proper names if you are sure that is the official spelling, as in Maine State Music Theatre.

Third World – avoid but capitalize if you cannot avoid.

time – when listing a span of time, Bowdoin style prefers attaching a.m. or p.m. to both the starting and ending times (2:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m., rather than 2:00–4:00 p.m.). Note the connecting punctuation is an **en-dash**, which is not surrounded by spaces. Also see listings for “a.m.” and “p.m.,” “midnight,” and “noon.” When listing a specific time, use Friday, October 22, at 2:00 p.m. versus Friday, October 22 at 2:00 p.m.

titles (professional, etc.), abbreviating – when an official title precedes a surname only, the title is spelled out. Bowdoin avoids abbreviating titles that precede names.

titles (professional, etc.), capitalization – official titles that precede someone’s name are capitalized (*President Safa Zaki, Professor Connelly*).

Do not capitalize descriptive titles before names (*economics professor Rachel Connelly, class agent John Smith*). Likewise, use lowercase for descriptive words that are not titles that come before a person’s name (*machinist Bob Stevens*).

In general, do not capitalize titles after names or those set off by commas (*Elizabeth McCormack, dean for academic affairs; John Smith, class agent*).

Exception: Named professorships—the titles of named professorships are uppercase whether they precede or follow the professor’s name (*Craig A. McEwen, Daniel B. Fayerweather Professor of Political Economy and Sociology Emeritus*). All words in the named professorship title are capitalized according to title style. This includes words that would not otherwise be capitalized, such as Professor and Emeritus or Emerita.

Use lowercase for titles standing alone (*the president, the dean for academic affairs, class agent, the director of graduate study*).

It is often easiest on the reader to move titles to follow names and make them lowercase, especially in the case of long titles (*John Q. Public, vice president for planning and advancement and assistant to the chief executive officer*, as opposed to *Vice President for Planning and Advancement and Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer John Q. Public*).

Exception: Titles in display (mastheads, other listings) or in formal usage (programs, announcements) are sometimes capitalized without regard to the above rules.

See also: individual titles, e.g., *president, governor*, etc.

titles (of works), style – use the following typographical styles for titles:

Books, periodicals, newspapers: italics (*Portland Press Herald*)

Articles, book chapters, short stories: roman type, within quotation marks (“Bernice Bobs Her Hair”)

Poems: generally roman type, within quotation marks (“The Road Not Taken”). Longer, epic works: italics (*Don Juan*)

Plays: italics (*Hamlet*)

Movies, television, radio: titles are italicized (*The Mary Tyler Moore Show*). Names of individual episodes: roman, within quotation marks (“Chuckles Bites the Dust”)

Musical works: operas and long works are italicized (*Aida*). Song titles are roman type, within quotation marks (“Hey, Jude”). Classical instrumental works known by “generic” terms such as symphony, concerto, etc., are set in roman type, no quotation marks; Bowdoin prefers the following capitalization style: Symphony no. 5 in G Major, op. 32.

Lectures: roman type, within quotation marks (“The Sack of the Palace: Reading Assyrian Reliefs”). However, lecture series are listed in roman type, title capitalization, no quotation marks (Visual Culture in the Twenty-First Century)

Exhibitions: Bowdoin style prefers exhibition titles set in italics (*The Walker Sisters and Collecting in Victorian Boston*)

Paintings, drawings, and other works of art: italics (*Mona Lisa*), except antiquities, which are roman type, no quotation marks (the Venus de Milo)

toward/towards – both are acceptable. For the sake of editorial consistency, the College prefers *toward*.

United Kingdom – spell out as a noun; UK (without periods) is primarily used as an adjective.

United States – spell out as a noun, although you may abbreviate it (*US*), no periods, on a second and subsequent references. Also may be abbreviated as an adjective (*US passport*). Stylistically, there may be instances where periods are acceptable.

university names, style – when a university campus is designated by its city name, separate the university name and the city by an en-dash (*University of Michigan–Ann Arbor*), not a comma. Using an “at” in place of the en-dash (*University of Michigan at Ann Arbor*) is also acceptable, though it can make a sentence read awkwardly. Whenever possible, check the university’s website for their preferred listing.

upperclass – when referring to students, *upperclass* is one word, no hyphen (*the upperclasses, upperclass students*); when referring to social class, it is two words as a noun (*the upper class*) and hyphenated as an adjective (*upper-class society*). See *classes*.

url (uniform resource locator) – it is not necessary to use the full “http://www” in web addresses in running text. Use the simple *bowdoin.edu* rather than <http://www.bowdoin.edu>. Do not italicize or underline web addresses. Do not use capital letters in web addresses. If a sentence ends with a web address, DO end the sentence with a period. If you think this will confuse potential web users, reword the sentence or place the url within parentheses or angled brackets (<>) and end the sentence with a period. In hyperlinks, just make the text a link and do not underline.

versus – avoid the abbreviation vs. in running copy.

vertical lists – best introduced by a complete grammatical sentence, followed by a colon. Items carry no closing punctuation unless they consist of complete sentences. If the items are numbers, a period follows the numeral and each item begins with a capital letter. To avoid, long, skinny lists, short items may be arranged in two or more columns. If items run over a line, the second and subsequent lines are usually indented. In a numbered or bulleted list, runover lines are aligned with the first word following the numeral or bullet.

Your application must include the following documents:
a full résumé

three letters of recommendation
all your diplomas, from high school to graduate school
a brief essay indicating why you want the position and why you consider yourself qualified for it
two forms of identification

Compose these sentences:

1. To illustrate the use of commas in dates
2. To distinguish the use of semicolons from the use of periods
3. To illustrate the use of parentheses within dashes

vice president – see *titles, capitalization*; note no hyphen.

vita – short name for a summary of one’s personal history and professional qualifications. The plural is *vitae*. The long form is *curriculum vita* (plural: *curricula vitae*). As an abbreviation: CV (no periods; plural: CVs).

voice mail – two words.

Walker Art Museum – this should not be used to refer to the Bowdoin College Museum of Art; it is close to the name of a museum in Minneapolis (which is the Walker Art Center), but it is decidedly not the name of Bowdoin’s museum. The correct name of Bowdoin’s art museum is the Bowdoin College Museum of Art. Much of the museum is located in the *Walker Art Building* (not Museum), but the name of the building should be used only in reference to the museum’s architectural history. If referring to the terrace, write “Terrace, Walker Art Building, Bowdoin College Museum of Art.” Technically, the terrace, or plinth, is an architectural element of the Walker Art Building.

web – lowercase “web,” and “website” is one word, lowercase. However, the *Associated Press* continues to capitalize “Web,” and both manuals continue to capitalize World Wide Web.

website – Bowdoin has switched to this lowercase single word from the previous use of “Web site” (two words, with Web capitalized).

website addresses – do not write “www.” in front of a url. If a url ends a complete sentence, do close the sentence with the appropriate punctuation mark.

well-known – hyphenated as an adjective; otherwise not (*Her accomplishments were well known.*).

west – lowercased as a direction but capitalized if referring to a specific geographic location (*the West*). Do not spell it out in a street address (*1460 W. Alameda*).

which/that – use *that* to introduce a restrictive clause—a clause that is essential to the meaning of the sentence. The use of the word *that* in this context does not take commas (*I have a car that has two doors.*). Use *which* (set off by commas) to introduce a nonrestrictive clause, or one that can be removed from the sentence without making it inaccurate (*My car, which has two doors, is blue.*). When in doubt, experiment with using the word *that*. If the sentence sounds good to the ear, you’ve probably chosen correctly.

If you are referring to a person, use *who* or *whom* (or *whose*) to introduce the restrictive clause.

white – lowercase in reference to race.

winter – lowercase (*winter sports*).

who, whom, that, etc. – use the appropriate forms of *who* to refer to people, *that* to refer to things. This

does, of course, mean that you will need to determine whether the correct form is *who* (subject), *whom* (object), or *whose* (possessive).

Correct: *The man whom I saw crossing the street. The person who is speaking. The dog that is barking. The dog that ran across the street.*

Incorrect: *The students that I teach or the professors that I liked best*—though these are frequently heard in conversation.

whose/who's – *whose* is a possessive pronoun. *Who's* is only ever a contraction of the words *who is* or *who has*. *Whose book is this? Who's going to the store with me? He is the only person I know who's ever failed gym.*

wordmark – see *Bowdoin wordmark*.

World Wide Web – as the formal name, capitalize World Wide Web.

writer in residence – no hyphens.

www — when listing URLs in running text, it is no longer necessary to include the prefix *www*. For example, refer to the Bowdoin website as simply *bowdoin.edu*.

ZIP code – postal service trademark; the acronym ZIP stands for zoning improvement plan and should be all uppercase letters.