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WRITERS IN ALL PROFESSIONS**

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Stylebook

and Briefing on Media Law

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BASIC



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STYLEBOOK

STYLEBOOK KEY

This updated and revised version of The Associated Press Stylebook has been organized like a dictionary. Need the acronym for a government agency? Look under the agency's name. Should you capitalize a word? Check the word itself or the **capitalization** entry. What's the format for baseball boxes? See **baseball**.

Following is a key to the entries:

airport Capitalize as part of a proper name: *La Guardia Airport, Newark International Airport*.

The first name of an individual and the word *international* may be deleted from a formal airport name while the remainder is capitalized: *John F. Kennedy International Airport, Kennedy International Airport, or Kennedy Airport*. Use whichever is appropriate in the context.

Do not make up names, however. There is no *Boston Airport*, for example. The *Boston airport* (lowercase *airport*) would be acceptable if for some reason the proper name, *Logan International Airport*, were not used.

airtight

air traffic controller (no hyphen.)

airways The system of routes that the federal government has established for airplane traffic.

See the **airline, airlines** entry for its use in carriers' names.

Alabama Abbrev.: *Ala.* See **state names**.

Entry words, in alphabetical order, are in **boldface**. They represent the accepted word forms unless otherwise indicated.

Text explains usage.

Examples of correct and incorrect usage are in italics.

Many entries simply give the correct spelling, hyphenation and/or capitalization.

Abbrev. indicates the correct abbreviation of a word.

Related topics are in **boldface**.

Other abbreviations used in the Stylebook:

n.: noun form

v.: verb form

adj.: adjectives

adv.: adverbs

A

a- The rules of **prefixes** apply, but in general no hyphen. Some examples:

achromatic

atonal

AAA Formerly the American Automobile Association. On second reference, *the automobile association* or *the association* is acceptable.

Headquarters is in Heathrow, Fla.

a, an Use the article *a* before consonant sounds: *a historic event*, *a one-year term* (sounds as if it begins with a *w*), *a united stand* (sounds like *you*).

Use the article *an* before vowel sounds: *an energy crisis*, *an honorable man* (the *h* is silent), *an NBA record* (sounds like it begins with the letter *e*), *an 1890s celebration*.

A&P Acceptable in all references for *Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co. Inc.* Headquarters is in Montvale, N.J.

AARP Use only the initials for the organization formerly known as the American Association of Retired Persons.

abbreviations and acronyms The notation *abbrev.* is used in this book to identify the abbreviated form that may be used for a word in some contexts.

A few universally recognized abbreviations are required in some circumstances. Some others are acceptable depending on the context. But in general, avoid alphabet soup. Do not use abbreviations or acronyms that the reader would not quickly recognize.

Guidance on how to use a particular abbreviation or acronym is provided in entries alphabetized according to the sequence of letters in the word or phrase.

An *acronym* is a word formed from the first letter or letters of a series of words: *laser* (light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation). An *abbreviation* is not an *acronym*.

Some general principles:

BEFORE A NAME: Abbreviate titles when used before a full name: *Dr.*, *Gov.*, *Lt. Gov.*, *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, *Rep.*, *the Rev.*, *Sen.* and certain military designations listed in the **military titles** entry.

For guidelines on how to use titles, see **courtesy titles; legislative titles; military titles; religious titles;** and the entries for the most commonly used titles.

AFTER A NAME: Abbreviate *junior* or *senior* after an individual's name. Abbreviate *company*, *corporation*, *incorporated* and *limited* when used after the name of a corporate entity. See entries under these words and **company names**.

In some cases, an academic degree may be abbreviated after an individual's name. See **academic degrees**.

WITH DATES OR NUMERALS:

Use the abbreviations *A.D.*, *B.C.*, *a.m.*, *p.m.*, *No.*, and abbreviate certain months when used with the day of the month.

Right: *In 450 B.C.; at 9:30 a.m.; in room No. 6; on Sept. 16.*

Wrong: *Early this a.m. he asked for the No. of your room.* The abbreviations are correct only with figures.

Right: *Early this morning he asked for the number of your room.*

See **months** and individual entries for these other terms:

IN NUMBERED ADDRESSES:

Abbreviate *avenue*, *boulevard* and *street* in numbered addresses: *He lives on Pennsylvania Avenue. He lives at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.*

See **addresses**.

STATES: The names of certain states and the *United States* are abbreviated with periods in some circumstances.

See **state names; datelines;** and individual entries.

ACCEPTABLE BUT NOT REQUIRED: Some organizations and government agencies are widely recognized by their initials: *CIA*, *FBI*, *GOP*.

If the entry for such an organization notes that an abbreviation is acceptable in all references or on second reference, that does not mean that its use should be automatic. Let the context determine, for example, whether to use *Federal Bureau of Investigation* or *FBI*.

See **second reference**.

AVOID AWKWARD CONSTRUCTIONS: Do not follow an organization's full name with an abbreviation or acronym in pa-

rentheses or set off by dashes. If an abbreviation or acronym would not be clear on second reference without this arrangement, do not use it.

Names not commonly before the public should not be reduced to acronyms solely to save a few words.

SPECIAL CASES: Many abbreviations are desirable in tabulations and certain types of technical writing. See individual entries.

CAPS, PERIODS: Use capital letters and periods according to the listings in this book. For words not in this book, use the first-listed abbreviation in Webster's New World College Dictionary. Generally, omit periods in acronyms unless the result would spell an unrelated word. But use periods in two-letter abbreviations: *U.S.*, *U.N.*, *U.K.*, *B.A.*, *B.C.* (*AP*, a trademark, is an exception. Also, no periods in *GI* and *EU*.)

Use all caps, but no periods, in longer abbreviations and acronyms when the individual letters are pronounced: *ABC*, *CIA*, *FBI*.

Use only an initial cap and then lowercase for acronyms of more than six letters, unless listed otherwise in this Stylebook or Webster's New World College Dictionary.

ABC Acceptable in all references for *American Broadcasting Cos.* (the plural is part of the corporate name).

Divisions are *ABC News*, *ABC Radio* and *ABC-TV*.

ABCs

able-bodied

ABM, ABMs Acceptable in all references for *anti-ballistic*

missile(s), but the term should be defined in the story. (The hyphen is an exception to Webster's.)

Avoid the redundant phrase *ABM missiles*.

A-bomb Use *atomic bomb* unless a direct quotation is involved.

See **Hiroshima**.

Aborigine Capitalize when referring to Australian indigenous people.

abortion Use *anti-abortion* instead of *pro-life* and *abortion rights* instead of *pro-abortion* or *pro-choice*. Avoid *abortionist*, which connotes a person who performs clandestine abortions; use a term such as *abortion doctor* or *abortion practitioner*.

aboveboard

absent-minded

absent without leave

AWOL is acceptable on second reference.

academic degrees If mention of degrees is necessary to establish someone's credentials, the preferred form is to avoid an abbreviation and use instead a phrase such as: *John Jones, who has a doctorate in psychology*.

Use an apostrophe in *bachelor's degree*, *a master's*, etc., but there is no possessive in *Bachelor of Arts* or *Master of Science*.

Also: an *associate degree* (no possessive).

Use such abbreviations as *B.A.*, *M.A.*, *LL.D.* and *Ph.D.* only when the need to identify many individuals by degree on first reference would make the preferred form cumbersome. Use these abbreviations only after a full name — never after just a last name.

When used after a name, an academic abbreviation is set off by commas: *Daniel Moynihan, Ph.D., spoke*.

Do not precede a name with a courtesy title for an academic degree and follow it with the abbreviation for the degree in the same reference:

Wrong: *Dr. Pam Jones, Ph.D.*

Right: *Dr. Pam Jones, a chemist*.

See **doctor**.

academic departments

Use lowercase except for words that are proper nouns or adjectives: *the department of history, the history department, the department of English, the English department*, or when *department* is part of the official and formal name: *University of Connecticut Department of Medicine*.

academic titles Capitalize and spell out formal titles such as *chancellor, chairman*, etc., when they precede a name. Lowercase elsewhere.

Lowercase modifiers such as *department* in *department Chairman Jerome Wiesner*.

See **doctor** and **titles**.

academy See **military academies**.

Academy Awards Presented annually by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Also known as the *Oscars*. (Both *Academy Awards* and *Oscars* are trademarks.)

Lowercase *the academy* and *the awards* whenever they stand alone.

accept, except *Accept* means to receive.

Except means to exclude.

accommodate

accused A person is *accused of*, not *with*, a crime.

To avoid any suggestion that an individual is being judged before a trial, do not use a phrase such as *accused slayer John Jones*; use *John Jones, accused of the slaying*.

For guidelines on related words, see **allege**; **arrest**; and **indict**.

Ace A trademark for a brand of elastic bandage.

acknowledgment

acre Equal to 43,560 square feet or 4,840 square yards. The metric equivalent is 0.4 (two-fifths) of a hectare or 4,047 square meters.

One square mile is 640 acres.

To convert to hectares, multiply by 0.4 (5 acres x 0.4 equals 2 hectares).

See **hectare**.

acronyms See the **abbreviations and acronyms** entry.

act Capitalize when part of the name for pending or implemented legislation: *the Taft-Hartley Act*.

acting Always lowercase, but capitalize any formal title that may follow before a name: *acting Mayor Peter Barry*.

See **titles**.

act numbers Use Arabic figures and capitalize *act*: *Act 1*; *Act 2*, *Scene 2*. But: *the first act*, *the second act*.

actor (man) **actress** (woman)

Actors' Equity Association Headquarters is in New York.

A.D. Acceptable in all references for *anno Domini*: in the year of the Lord.

Because the full phrase would read *in the year of the Lord 96*, the abbreviation *A.D.* goes before the figure for the year: *A.D. 96*.

Do not write: *The fourth century A.D.* *The fourth century* is sufficient. If *A.D.* is not specified with a year, the year is presumed to be *A.D.*

See **B.C.**

addresses Use the abbreviations *Ave.*, *Blvd.* and *St.* only with a numbered address: *1600 Pennsylvania Ave.* Spell them out and capitalize when part of a formal street name without a number: *Pennsylvania Avenue*. Lowercase and spell out when used alone or with more than one street name: *Massachusetts and Pennsylvania avenues*.

All similar words (*alley*, *drive*, *road*, *terrace*, etc.) always are spelled out. Capitalize them when part of a formal name without a number; lowercase when used alone or with two or more names.

Always use figures for an address number: *9 Morningside Circle*.

Spell out and capitalize *First* through *Ninth* when used as street names; use figures with two letters for *10th* and above: *7 Fifth Ave.*, *100 21st St.*

Abbreviate compass points used to indicate directional ends of a street or quadrants of a city in a numbered address: *222 E. 42nd St.*, *562 W. 43rd St.*, *600 K St. N.W.* Do not abbreviate if the number is omitted: *East 42nd Street*, *West 43rd Street*, *K Street Northwest*.

See **highway designations**.

Use periods in the abbreviation *P.O.* for *P.O. Box* numbers.

adjectives The abbreviation *adj.* is used in this book to identify the spelling of the adjectival forms of words that frequently are misspelled.

The **comma** entry provides guidance on punctuating a series of adjectives.

The **hyphen** entry provides guidance on handling compound modifiers used before a noun.

ad-lib (n., v., adj.)

administration Lowercase: *the administration, the president's administration, the governor's administration, the Reagan administration.*

See the **government, junta, regime** entry for distinctions that apply in using these terms and *administration*.

administrative law judge

This is the federal title for the position formerly known as *hearing examiner*. Capitalize it when used as a formal title before a name.

To avoid the long title, seek a construction that sets the title off by commas: *The administrative law judge, John Williams, disagreed.*

administrator Never abbreviate. Capitalize when used as a formal title before a name.

See **titles**.

admiral See **military titles**.

admissible

admit, admitted These words may in some contexts give the erroneous connotation of wrongdoing.

A person who announces that he is a homosexual, for example, may be acknowledging it to the

world, not admitting it. *Said* is usually sufficient.

ad nauseam

Adobe Acrobat A file reader that decodes documents to the portable document format.

adopt, approve, enact, pass Amendments, ordinances, resolutions and rules are *adopted* or *approved*.

Bills are *passed*.

Laws are *enacted*.

Adrenalin A trademark for the synthetic or chemically extracted forms of epinephrine, a substance produced by the adrenal glands.

The nonproprietary terms are *epinephrine hydrochloride* or *adrenaline*.

Adventist See **Seventh-day Adventist Church**.

adverbs The abbreviation *adv.* is used in this book to identify the spelling of adverbial forms of words frequently misspelled.

See the **hyphen** entry in the **Punctuation** chapter for guidelines on when an adverb should be followed by a hyphen in constructing a compound modifier.

adverse, averse *Adverse* means unfavorable: *He predicted adverse weather.*

Averse means reluctant, opposed: *She is averse to change.*

adviser Not *advisor*.

advisory

Aer Lingus The headquarters of this airline is in Dublin, Ireland.

Aeroflot The headquarters of this airline is in Moscow.

Aeromexico This airline formerly was known as Aeronaves de Mexico.

Headquarters is in Mexico City.

aesthetic

affect, effect *Affect*, as a verb, means to influence: *The game will affect the standings.*

Affect, as a noun, is best avoided. It occasionally is used in psychology to describe an emotion, but there is no need for it in everyday language.

Effect, as a verb, means to cause: *He will effect many changes in the company.*

Effect, as a noun, means result: *The effect was overwhelming. He miscalculated the effect of his actions. It was a law of little effect.*

Afghan (adj.) *Afghani* is the *Afghan* unit of currency.

AFL-CIO Acceptable in all references for the *American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations*.

A-frame

African Of or pertaining to Africa, or any of its peoples or languages. Do not use the word as a synonym for *black* or *Negro*.

In some countries of Africa, *colored* is used to describe those of mixed white and black ancestry. In other societies *colored* is considered a derogatory word.

Because of the ambiguity, avoid the term in favor of a phrase such as *mixed racial ancestry*. If the word cannot be

avoided, place it in quotation marks and provide its meaning. See **colored**.

African-American The preferred term is *black*. Use *African-American* only in quotations or the names of organizations or if individuals describe themselves so.

See **black**.

after- No hyphen after this prefix when it is used to form a noun:

aftereffect afterthought

Follow *after* with a hyphen when it is used to form compound modifiers:

after-dinner drink after-theater snack

afterward Not *afterwards*.

Agency for International Development *AID* is acceptable on second reference.

agenda A list. It takes singular verbs and pronouns: *The agenda has run its course.*

The plural is *agendas*.

agent Lowercase unless it is a formal title used before a name.

In the FBI, the formal title is *special agent*. Use *Special Agent William Smith* if appropriate in a special context. Otherwise, make it *agent William Smith* or *FBI agent William Smith*.

See **titles**.

ages Always use figures for people and animals (but not for inanimates): *The girl is 15 years old; the law is eight years old.* When the context does not require *years* or *years old*, the figure is presumed to be *years*.

Use hyphens for ages expressed as adjectives before a noun or as substitutes for a noun.

Examples: *A 5-year-old boy, but the boy is 5 years old. The boy, 7, has a sister, 10. The woman, 26, has a daughter 2 months old. The race is for 3-year-olds. The woman is in her 30s (no apostrophe).*

See also **boy; girl; infant; and youth.**

See **comma in punctuation guidelines.**

ages of history See the **historical periods and events** entry.

agnostic, atheist An *agnostic* is a person who believes it is impossible to know whether there is a God.

An *atheist* is a person who believes there is no God.

aid, aide *Aid* is assistance.

An *aide* is a person who serves as an assistant.

aide-de-camp, aides-de-camp A military officer who serves as assistant and confidential secretary to a superior.

AIDS Acceptable in all references for *acquired immune deficiency syndrome*, sometimes written as *acquired immunodeficiency syndrome*.

AIDS is an affliction in which a virus has weakened the body's immune system and cancer or serious infections have occurred. *AIDS* is spread most often through sexual contact; contaminated needles or syringes shared by drug abusers; infected blood or blood products; and from pregnant women to their offspring.

The scientific name for the virus is human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV. The most common type of the virus is often design-

nated HIV-1 to distinguish it from another type called HIV-2.

National *AIDS* statistics, which are updated monthly, are available from the federal government's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

A note about *AIDS* tests:

Routine *AIDS* tests look for the presence of antibodies the body has made to defend against the *AIDS* virus. A positive antibody test is evidence of an infection with the *AIDS* virus. People who test positive are often described as being *HIV-positive*. (Hyphenate *HIV-positive* only when used as a compound adjective. *HIV virus* is redundant.)

A positive result does not mean the person tested has *AIDS*. People infected with the virus do not have *AIDS* until they develop serious symptoms. Many remain infected but apparently healthy for years.

AIDS antibody tests should be distinguished from tests for the *AIDS* virus itself. The presence of the *AIDS* virus can be confirmed by laboratory cultures or by the much more sensitive polymerase chain reaction, or PCR, test.

ain't A dialectical or substandard contraction. Use it only in quoted matter or special contexts.

air base Two words. Follow the practice of the U.S. Air Force, which uses *air force base* as part of the proper name for its bases in the United States and *air base* for its installations abroad.

On second reference: *the Air Force base, the air base, or the base.*

Do not abbreviate, even in datelines:

LACKLAND AIR FORCE BASE,
Texas (AP) —

Air Canada Headquarters is in Montreal.

air-condition, air-conditioned (v. and adj.) The nouns are: *air conditioner, air conditioning*.

aircraft names Use a hyphen when changing from letters to figures; no hyphen when adding a letter after figures.

Some examples for aircraft often in the news: *B-1, BAC-111, C-5A, DC-10, FH-227, F-15 Eagle, F-16 Falcon, L-1011, MiG-21, Tu-144, 727-100C, 747, 747B, VC-10. Airbus A300 or A300* (no hyphen) is an exception.

This hyphenation principle is the one used most frequently by manufacturers and users. Apply it in all cases for consistency. For other elements of a name, use the form adopted by the manufacturer or user. If in doubt, consult Jane's All the World's Aircraft.

NO QUOTES: Do not use quotation marks for aircraft with names: *Air Force One, the Spirit of St. Louis, Concorde*.

PLURALS: *DC-10s, 747s*. But: *747B's*. (As noted in **plurals**, the apostrophe is used in forming the plural of a single letter.)

SEQUENCE: Use Arabic figures to establish the sequence of aircraft, spacecraft and missiles: *Apollo 10*. Do not use hyphens.

aircraft terms Use *engine*, not *motor*, for the units that propel aircraft: a *twin-engine plane* (not *twin engined*).

Use *jet plane* or *jetliner* to describe only those aircraft driven solely by jet engines. Use *turbo-prop* to describe an aircraft on which the jet engine is geared to a propeller. Turboprops sometimes are called *propjets*.

Jet planes in commercial use include the *BAC-111; Boeing 707, 727, 737, 747; the Convair 880; the DC-8, DC-9, and DC-10; the L-1011; and the VC-10*.

See the **engine, motor** entry.

airfare One word.

air force Capitalize when referring to U.S. forces: *the U.S. Air Force, the Air Force, Air Force regulations*. Do not use the abbreviation *USAF*.

Congress established the Army Air Forces (note the s) in 1941. Prior to that, the air arm was known as the U.S. Army Air Corps. The U.S. Air Force (no s) was created as a separate service in 1947.

Use lowercase for the forces of other nations: *the Israeli air force*.

This approach has been adopted for consistency, because many foreign nations do not use *air force* as the proper name.

See the **military academies** and **military titles** entries.

air force base See **air base**.

Air Force One The Air Force applies this name to any of its aircraft the president of the United States may be using.

In ordinary usage, however, *Air Force One* is the name of the Air Force plane normally reserved for the president's use.

Air France Headquarters is in Paris.

Air-India The hyphen is part of the formal name.

Headquarters is in Bombay, India.

Air Jamaica Headquarters is in Kingston, Jamaica.

airline, airlines Capitalize *airlines*, *air lines* and *airways* when used as part of a proper airline name.

Major airlines are listed in this book separately by name.

Companies that use *airlines* include Alitalia, American, Continental, Hawaiian, Iberia, Japan, Northwest, Trans World, United and Western.

Delta uses *air lines*.

Companies that use *airways* include British and Qantas.

Companies that use none of these include Aer Lingus, Aeromexico, Air Canada, Air France, Air-India, Air Jamaica, Hughes Airwest, KLM and Western Alaska.

On second reference, use just the proper name (*Delta*), an abbreviation if applicable (*TWA*), or the *airline*. Use *airlines* when referring to more than one line.

Do not use *air line*, *air lines* or *airways* in generic references to an airline.

airmail

airman See **military titles**.

Air National Guard

airport Capitalize as part of a proper name: *La Guardia Airport*, *Newark International Airport*.

The first name of an individual and the word *international* may be deleted from a formal airport name while the remainder is capitalized: *John F. Kennedy International Airport*, *Kennedy International Airport*, or *Kennedy Airport*. Use whichever is appropriate in the context.

Do not make up names, however. There is no *Boston Airport*, for example. The *Boston airport* (lowercase *airport*) would be ac-

ceptable if for some reason the proper name, *Logan International Airport*, were not used.

airtight

air traffic controller (no hyphen)

airways The system of routes that the federal government has established for airplane traffic.

See the **airline, airlines** entry for its use in carriers' names.

aka (no spacing is an exception to Webster's)

Alabama Abbrev.: *Ala.* See **state names**.

a la carte

a la king, a la mode

Alaska Do not abbreviate. Largest land area of the 50 states. See **state names**.

Alaska Standard Time The time zone used in all of Alaska, except the western Aleutian Islands and St. Lawrence Island, which are on *Hawaii-Aleutian Standard Time*.

There is also an *Alaska Daylight Time*.

See **time zones**.

Alberta A province of western Canada. Do not abbreviate. See **datelines**.

albino, albinos

Alcoa Inc. *Alcoa* is acceptable in all references to the formerly named Aluminum Company of America.

Alcoa also is a city in Tennessee.

alcoholic Use *recovering*, not *reformed*, in referring to those afflicted with the disease of alcoholism.

alderman Do not abbreviate. See **legislative titles**.

alert See **weather terms**.

Al Fatah A Palestinian guerrilla organization. Drop the article *Al* if preceded by an English article: *the Fatah statement*, *a Fatah leader*.

align

Alitalia Airlines Headquarters is in Rome.

Al-Jazeera

all- Use a hyphen:

all-around (not all-round)	all-out
all-clear	all-star

See **all right** and the **all time**, **all-time** entries.

Allahu akbar The Arabic phrase for "God is great."

allege The word must be used with great care.

Some guidelines:

—Avoid any suggestion that the writer is making an allegation.

—Specify the source of an allegation. In a criminal case, it should be an arrest record, an indictment or the statement of a public official connected with the case.

—Use *alleged bribe* or similar phrase when necessary to make it clear that an unproved action is not being treated as fact. Be sure that the source of the charge is specified elsewhere in the story.

—Avoid redundant uses of *alleged*. It is proper to say: *The dis-*

trict attorney alleged that she took a bribe. Or: *The district attorney accused her of taking a bribe.* But not: *The district attorney accused her of allegedly taking a bribe.*

—Do not use *alleged* to describe an event that is known to have occurred, when the dispute is over who participated in it. Do not say: *He attended the alleged meeting* when what you mean is: *He allegedly attended the meeting.*

—Do not use *alleged* as a routine qualifier. Instead, use a word such as *apparent*, *ostensible* or *reputed*.

For guidelines on related words, see **accused**; **arrest**; and **indict**.

Allegheny Mountains Or simply: *the Alleghenies*.

alley Do not abbreviate. See **addresses**.

allies, allied Capitalize *allies* or *allied* only when referring to the combination of the United States and its Allies during World War I or World War II: *The Allies defeated Germany. He was in the Allied invasion of France.*

allot, allotted, allotting

all right (adv.) Never *alright*. Hyphenate only if used colloquially as a compound modifier: *He is an all-right guy.*

all time, all-time An *all-time high*, but *the greatest runner of all time*.

Avoid the redundant phrase *all-time record*.

allude, refer To *allude* to something is to speak of it without specifically mentioning it.

To *refer* is to mention it directly.

allusion, illusion *Allusion* means an indirect reference: *The allusion was to his opponent's war record.*

Illusion means an unreal or false impression: *The scenic director created the illusion of choppy seas.*

alma mater

almost never Do not use the phrase. Instead use *seldom* or *hardly ever*.

al-Qaida International terrorist organization headed by Osama bin Laden.

also-ran (n.)

altar, alter An *altar* is a tablelike platform used in a religious service.

To *alter* is to change.

Aluminum Company of America Now Alcoa Inc.
See **Alcoa**.

alumnus, alumni, alumna, alumnae Use *alumnus* (*alumni* in the plural) when referring to a man who has attended a school.

Use *alumna* (*alumnae* in the plural) for similar references to a woman.

Use *alumni* when referring to a group of men and women.

Alzheimer's disease This is a progressive, irreversible neurological disorder. Most victims are older than 65, but Alzheimer's can strike in the 40s or 50s.

Symptoms include gradual memory loss, impairment of judgment, disorientation, personality

change, difficulty in learning and loss of language skills.

No cure is known.

AM Acceptable in all references to the *amplitude modulation* system of radio transmission.

Amalgamated Transit Union Use this full name on first reference.

Headquarters is in Washington.

ambassador Use for both men and women. Capitalize as a formal title before a name.

See **titles**.

Amber Alert A procedure for rapidly publicizing the abduction of a child.

amendments to the Constitution Use *First Amendment*, *10th Amendment*, etc.

Colloquial references to the Fifth Amendment's protection against self-incrimination are best avoided, but where appropriate: *He took the Fifth seven times.*

American An acceptable description for a citizen of the United States.

American Airlines Headquarters is in Fort Worth, Texas.

American Baptist Association See **Baptist churches**.

American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. See **Baptist churches**.

American Bar Association ABA is acceptable on second reference. Also: *the bar association*, *the association*.

Headquarters is in Chicago.