

AILA's Style Sheet (General Usage)

ABBREVIATIONS:

All first instances of words/terms are to be spelled out (later, they can be shortened to acronyms or abbreviations)

When introducing an acronym or shortened term in parentheses, do not use quotations marks

- Ex.: The Department of State (DOS), not ("DOS")

Do not use periods between letters in acronyms/abbreviations

- USCIS is correct (Note: Not U.S.C.I.S. and **NEVER** use CIS)
- DOS is correct; not D.O.S.
- CFR (ditto USC) is correct; not C.F.R.

Do not use the possessive case within an acronym parenthetical

- Incorrect: The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS's) mandate is vague
- Correct: The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) mandate is vague

CAPITALIZATION:

- If a **job title or position** is part of a sentence, do not capitalize the title unless (1) the title precedes the name directly, or (2) the title is set off immediately after with commas.

Jane Smith has been chief executive officer of IBM for three years; but
Chief Executive Officer Jane Smith has been with IBM for three years; or
Jane Smith, Chief Executive Officer, has been with IBM for three years.
Condoleeza Rice is the secretary of state; but Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice is in town; or
Condoleeza Rice, Secretary of State, is in town.
John Ashcroft had been attorney general for three years; but Attorney General John Ashcroft
held his position for three years; or Alberto Gonzales, Attorney General, is visiting today.
Judge Jackson, or Immigration Judge Bukszpan, State Secretary Rice.

However,

AILA member Jan Pederson is attending the conference. Member, in this instance, is not capitalized.

Otherwise, generally

The secretary of state will be visiting Iraq.
The immigration judge overruled the motion.
The chief immigration judge will be in Florida tomorrow.
The president of the United States is giving a speech today.

And, on second reference

President George Bush; the president; Senator Hillary Clinton; the senator; Representative Van Hollen; the congressman; *but* "One senator and two representatives spoke."

- Capitalize title in all instances when referring to a Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.
- Senate, House, Congress (referring to the U.S. Congress); **but** congressional, senatorial; federal.
- The Court is capitalized only when referring to the U.S. Supreme Court; otherwise, lowercase). **But**, the Board (if referring to a specific tribunal, such as the Board of Immigration Appeals).
- **AILA Titles:** the New York Chapter, **but lowercase on 2nd reference**—the chapter; generally, chapter chair, chapter bylaws; the EOIR Liaison Committee, **but lowercase on 2nd reference**—the committee; generally, the committee chair; but EOIR Liaison Committee Chair Jane Doe; President Palma Yanni, **but lowercase on 2nd reference**—the president. Also, the Publications department, AILA's Membership department; **but** the National Office is always capitalized and Board of Governors (on 2nd reference, Board or BOG) is always capitalized.
- **Headings and Titles of Articles:**
 - (a) Capitalize the initial word, the word immediately following a colon (if any).
 - a. Winning at the Ninth Circuit: A Statistical Analysis
 - (b) Capitalize articles, conjunctions, and prepositions of five or more letters.
 - a. Before, After, Through, Between, etc.
 - (c) Capitalize verbs and pronouns: Is, It, Be, etc.
 - (d) **Hyphenated words:** (1) Always capitalize the first element. (2) Capitalize any subsequent elements *except* articles, prepositions, coordinating conjunctions (*and, but, for, or, nor, in, of*)
 - o Foreign-Born; Employment-Based; Family-Based, Under-Served; President-Elect; Asylum-Seeker; Brother-in-Law's Petition; Out-of-District Applicants; Live-in Alien. **But**, Re-entry Permit; Pre-examination Interview
- **Statutes, Regulations, Agencies:** Spell out full name on 1st reference (except *and, but, for, or, nor, in, of*); but use **acronym** OR **abbreviation** on 2nd reference. **But**, it is permissible to lowercase "the act", "the regulation" upon 2nd reference or in general when referring to no specific act or regulation.

NUMBERS:

- **Spell out one to nine**, first to ninth, and the first word of a sentence.
 - (a) **Use figures for 10 and above**, and 10th (**not** 10th) and above, unless it is the first word of a sentence. **But**, spell out 10 in "three- and ten-year bars."
 - (b) **Million**, billion, etc., are spelled out; the prefix should be spelled out if under 10, except when referring to money: six million people, but \$6 million.
- **Dates:** "October 16" (**not** October 16th) but "the 16th of every month"; October 16–18; October 1, 1999. In a sentence, do not omit the comma after the year. ("The scheduled October 1, 2000, effective date has been postponed."). Also, if you say *from* then you should use *to*, not the en-dash. (The conference will take place from January 1 to 3; *or* the conference will take place January 1–3. *Not* the conference will take place from January 1–3.)
- **Age: Always use figures:** the 9-year-old boy; the girl was 6 years old; at the age of 8, she immigrated to America; the woman was 72 when she died.

- **Phone numbers:** For domestic toll numbers, use the form “(202) 216-2400” [note space after area code]. For toll-free numbers, use “1-888-622-7189.” For international numbers, use, *e.g.*, (+44) (17) 1123-4567. (*i.e.*, use “+” sign, country code, and city code in parentheses).
- **Inclusive Numbers:** Always retain the last two digits (assuming we’re talking about numbers above 10), but drop other repetitious digits. *E.g.*, 23–24, 1234–301, 1234–39, 1002–03, 999–1002 (*not* “from 23–24”). In convoluted situations, use “to”: §§3-6A-05 to -07, or §§3-103 to 3-105.
- **Percents:** Use numerals. Spell out percent, except in tables or other special situations. (“3 percent”)
- **Fractions:** 8½-hour delay; 3½-year-old girl; 3½ years.
- **Decimals:** Use figures (0.02 percent; .250 batting average; .44 magnum).

GEOGRAPHY:

- **States:** Standing alone, are not abbreviated. When following the name of a city, use “UPPERCASE” abbreviations, no period (*e.g.*, MD, D.C., PA, CA); D.C. is an exception to the “no periods” rule. Also ALL CAPS when used as part of an address:
 - *Ex.*: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Texas Service Center, P.O. Box 851488, Mesquite, TX 75185-1488
- **Cities.** Common cities can stand alone without the state or country listed. *E.g.*, Chicago, San Francisco, Paris, London
- **Nations:** Generally, use “U.S.” as an adjective, but spell out United States as a noun (*e.g.*, “U.S. citizens”; *but* “citizens of the United States”)
- **State Political Affiliation:** Use state abbreviations with political designations, *e.g.*, Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA), Representative Elijah Cummings (D-MD).

PUNCTUATION AND TYPOGRAPHY:

- use **serial comma** when writing lists: (“red, white, and blue”).
- **Prefixes.** Notably, most usages of “non” are without hyphens, unless needed for clarity: nonimmigrant, nonmember, noncitizen, nonadmitted, *but* non-native, non-AILA member.
- **Quotation marks:** Use “smart” quotation marks where possible (*i.e.*, “ ” not " "), except when referring to measurements. A period or comma goes inside the right quotation mark; colons and semi-colons go outside the quotation mark (*Exceptions:* Period or comma would go outside close-quote mark if the quote is around a single letter—for example, the letter “A”).
- **Hyphens and dashes:** Hyphens are connectors; dashes are separators.
 - (a) A **hyphen** is the one that’s on your keyboard. It’s most commonly used for phone numbers; compound modifiers (*e.g.*, “far-reaching effects”; “well-known author”); prefixes (“non-native”)
 - (1) use **suspended hyphen** if appropriate (“him- or herself”).
 - (b) An **em dash** (—) is used to separate a phrase in a complex sentence when commas won’t suffice; “to denote—and this might be getting a bit boring here—a sudden break in thought that occurs in a sentence”; and as a separator such as the one that appears at the beginning of this paragraph.
 - (c) An **en dash** (–) is used most often to indicate inclusive numbers (*e.g.*, 734–35), essentially a substitute for the words “to” and “through”; used for other specialized purposes: (ex: “non–

employment-based visas”; non–U.S.-licensed practitioners”; “family– and employment-based visas”; 6– or 7-year-old child”). Also used for case names: “*Matter of A–N–*.”

- **use apostrophe “s”** for possessives of names and acronyms ending in s (e.g., DHS’s authority, Chris’s house). DO NOT use ‘s inside a parenthetical:

Ex.: Incorrect: “The Department of Homeland Security (DHS’s) authority to withhold a visa”

Ex.: Correct: “The Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) authority to withhold a visa ...”

- **Italics:** No italics for common words or common legal words in Latin (sua sponte, en banc, non sequitur, inter alia, de novo, ad hoc, pro bono, nolo contendere, etc.)

(a) **But** “e.g.”; “i.e.”; “Id.”; “et al.”; “et seq.” And, of course, use italics for emphasis.

(b) Italicize (but do not underline) **e-mail addresses and URLs**. Remove ALL hyperlinks.

Web Addresses: When citing to websites, remove the “http://” ONLY if it precedes “www”.

Ex.: Not <http://www.usdoj.gov/eoir/eoirforms/eoir28.pdf>;

But, www.usdoj.gov/eoir/eoirforms/eoir28.pdf

MISCELLANEOUS:

- **Gender:** Try not to use the masculine pronoun for the indefinite. Use “his or her,” “he or she” (but not he/she)
- **Time:** 9:00 am; 5:00 pm; 12:00 pm
- **Degrees:** Lowercase if generic—bachelor’s degree, Bachelor of Science degree in Economics; master’s degree, Master of Arts degree in Public Administration. Use periods with acronyms—B.A., M.A., Ph.D., M.B.A., LL.M., LL.B.