



SOUTH  
FLORIDA  
State College



**S** *St* **yle**  
**GUIDE**



# A

## abbreviations

Use only universally recognized abbreviations: *Gov., Jr., Ave., etc.* Write out all abbreviations on first reference: *South Florida State College (SFSC) was established in 1965. SFSC offers over 70 academic programs.*

## acronyms

Upon first reference, write out the organization or term with the accompanied acronym in parentheses: *South Florida State College (SFSC)*. Do not write out common acronyms like *RSVP* or *GPA*.

## advisor/adviser

Both are accepted spellings, but *advisor* is the official role.

## affect, effect

*Affect* is a verb that means *to influence*. *Effect* can be a verb that means *to cause* or a noun that means *result*. When a noun is needed, *effect* is used.

## ages

Use numerals to depict ages: *The 5-year-old boy. The girl is 15 years old.*

## alumni

Use *alumna* for a female, *alumnus* for a male, *alumnae* for a group of females, and *alumni* for a group of males. For a general grouping, use *alumni*.

## alumni class years

For alumni from SFSC, use the two-digit year of graduation after the name: *George Herman '97*. If the alumna or alumnus received more than one degree from SFSC, both degree years should be listed: *Gwendolyn Smith '02, '05*.

## a.m., p.m.

For time, use lowercase *a.m.* and *p.m.* with periods.

## ampersand

Only use with formal company names or formal titles of compositions: *Johnson & Johnson*. Never use in place of *and*.

## apostrophe

Used to show possession: *Michael's hat*. When used with a name that ends in *s*, use only the apostrophe: *Gus' cheese*. Apostrophes are not used to pluralize a word or name.

## **athletics**

South Florida State College Panthers, SFSC Panthers, the Panthers, Panther Baseball, Panther Softball, Panther Volleyball, and Panther Cross Country are all correct.

## **B**

### **board of trustees**

The District Board of Trustees must be capitalized and can be referred to as *DBOT* or *the Board* after first reference.

### **buildings**

When giving directions, use the letter of the building: *Building B*. Use the formal title otherwise: *Catherine P. Cornelius Student Services and Classroom Complex*.

Buildings with formal names include:

Building A: Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts

Building B: Catherine P. Cornelius Student Services and Classroom Complex

Building H: Bill Sachsenmaier Hall

Building HSEC: Dr. Norman L. Stephens Jr. Health & Science Education Center

Building J: Joseph E. Johnston Memorial Student Center

### **bullets**

When creating a bulleted list, begin with a capital letter and if the bullet is a full sentence, add punctuation. If it is not a full sentence, do not include punctuation at the end.

## **C**

### **campus**

Capitalize when referring to each campus: *DeSoto Campus*, *Hardee Campus*, and *Highlands Campus*. Use lowercase *campuses* when referring to more than one campus or use the generic *SFSC campus locations*. There is no main campus nor satellite campuses. The Highlands Campus can be referred to as the largest campus.

### **cancel**

Canceled has one l but cancellation has two.

**capital/Capitol**

The city where the office of government for the state is located is the *capital*. The building in Washington D.C and in other state capitals is the *Capitol*.

**capitalization**

Capitalize the first letter of proper nouns, proper names, languages, ethnicities, and one-of-a-kind events. Also, capitalize a title before a name, but not after.

**Central Florida**

Central Florida is capitalized.

**chair**

The person who supervises a committee can either be the *chair*, *chairperson*, *chairman*, or *chairwoman*.

**college**

When referring to SFSC by stating *the College*, capitalize College as a specific reference to SFSC. If using college in a general sense, such as college readiness, college students, and college courses, use a lowercase c.

**collegewide**

Collegewide is one word, as is statewide, nationwide, campuswide, and worldwide.

**colon**

Use a colon before starting a list or for emphasis: *My favorite animals: penguins, elephants, turtles, and quokkas*. The word following the colon is not capitalized.

**comma**

When listing items, add a comma before the *and* for clarity: *June likes chocolate, ice cream, and cupcakes*. This comma is called an Oxford, serial, or Harvard comma.

**Commencement**

Commencement is a ceremony that takes place in the fall and the spring each year and are referred to formally with the year of occurrence: *Fall 2022 Commencement* and *Spring 2023 Commencement*. Graduation is the completion of all degree or certificate requirements noted on a transcript.

**corporate titles and offices**

If a title appears before a person's name, capitalize it. If it appears after the name, add a comma and keep it lowercase: *Vice President Peter Elliott or Peter Elliott, vice president of administrative services*. Capitalize the name of the office: *Office of the President or President's Office*.

**county**

Capitalize when referring to each county: *DeSoto County, Hardee County, and Highlands County*. Use lowercase *counties* when referring to more than one.

### **course names and numbers**

Full course names are capitalized and the course number will include an abbreviation of the course in capitals and the number: *ART1300C*.

### **credits**

The amount of credit hours should be displayed numerically: *3 credit hours*.

## **D**

### **dates**

When space allows, dates should include the day of the week with a comma, the abbreviated month for all months except March-July, the numerical date, a comma, and the year: *Monday, Feb. 14, 2022*. The year can be omitted if already mentioned or unnecessary: *Monday, Feb. 14*.

### **days of the week**

Do not abbreviate the day of the week. Each should be spelled out or omitted.

### **degrees**

Capitalize the full name of the degree with the correct use of *of* or *in*: *Bachelor of Science in Nursing* or *Associate in Science in Accounting Technology*. Make lowercase if stating the degree more casually: *She has a bachelor's in education*. For bachelor's and master's degrees, include an apostrophe s. For associate, doctoral, and doctorate degrees, do not.

### **departments and offices**

Department is used for academic classification and office is used for staff classification: *Department of Nursing* or *Nursing Department* and *Office of Financial Aid* or *Financial Aid Office*.

Other formal names include:

Advising and Counseling Center  
Career Development Center  
Welcome Center

## **E**

### **e.g.**

Means "for example" and should be followed by a comma: *e.g., penguins, elephants, tigers*.

## **effect, affect**

*Affect* is a verb that means *to influence*. *Effect* can be a verb that means *to cause* or a noun that means *result*. When a noun is needed, *effect* is used.

## **eLearning**

For eLearning, the e should always be lowercase and the L should be capital.

## **ellipsis**

An ellipsis can be used to show an incomplete thought, a significant pause, or the removal of a word in a sentence. Add a space before and a space after: *He wasn't angry ... he was simply exhausted.*

## **email**

Use as one lowercase word without a hyphen

## **emeriti**

Use *emerita* for a female, *emeritus* for a male, *emeritae* for a group of females, and *emeriti* for a group of males. For a general grouping, use *emeriti*.

## **etc.**

Should be used at the end of a list to show that there are more options

## **ethnicities**

Consider if it is necessary before you include a person's ethnicity in their description. All races and ethnicities should be capitalized, including *Black* and *White*.

# **F**

## **federal**

Capitalize for government offices that use the word as part of their name: *Federal Aviation Administration*. Keep lowercase when used as an adjective: *federal funds*.

## **fractions**

Spell out amounts less than one using hyphens: *one-eighth*. Use numerals and a slash when concerning age and decimals when concerning credits: *4 ½ years old and 5.5 credits*

## **freshman, freshmen**

A freshman is one student who is newly enrolled at the College or is in the ninth grade. Freshmen is the plural of freshman. Use the singular version when naming a course or event: *Freshman English*.

**full-time, full time**

Use a hyphen when placed before a word as an adjective: *full-time faculty*. Otherwise, it is two words: *Sharon works full time at the College*.

**fundraising**

One word when describing the act of soliciting donations

## G

**GPA**

GPA is widely known to mean grade point average, so GPA should be used.

**government**

Always lowercase and do not abbreviate: *state government*.

**grades**

Spell out all grade levels from first to ninth and use numerals for 10th-12th.

## H

**health care**

Two words when describing the field of care

**highways**

Use name and number for the names of these roadways: *U.S. Highway 27*

**homepage**

Should be lowercase and one word

**Honors Program**

At SFSC, the Honors Program is the name of the group of additional and enhanced educational opportunities provided for students and should be capitalized.

**hyphens**

Use a hyphen to join two or more words to create a compound modifier: *real-world experience*.

## I

### **i.e.**

Means “to say” and is used to further explain something, not to give examples: *Commencement begins promptly at 6 p.m. (i.e., you cannot be late).* It is always followed by a comma.

### **internet**

Should be lowercase and one word

### **interrobang**

A non-standard punctuation mark that combines a question mark and an exclamation point and is used for asking a question in an excited manner

### **italics**

Use to show a word is in a language other than English or to show that a word will be defined: *She was eating rellenos de papa, Puerto Rican meat-stuffed potatoes, for lunch.*

## J

### **Jr.**

In a name, there is no comma before Jr. The same is true for Sr.

## L

### **LPN**

Acronym for Licensed Practical Nurse

### **letter grades**

Show as a capital letter. When plural, use an apostrophe s: *She earned all A's.*

## M

### **midnight**

Use midnight when the time is 12 a.m. exactly. For every minute after, use the numerical version: *12:18 a.m.*



### **military titles**

Capitalize the military rank before an individual's name: *Capt. Hook*

### **money**

Use the dollar sign and include cents: \$34.58. For full dollar amounts without cents, omit the zeroes: \$8.

### **Months**

Abbreviate January, February, August, September, October, November, and December. Do not abbreviate March-July.

### **more than, over**

Use interchangeably to indicate greater numerical value: *more than \$100* or *over 1 million served*

## *N*

### **non-degree-seeking student**

There are hyphens in *non-degree-seeking* when referring to a student who enrolls in classes for personal benefit and not to pursue a degree.

### **nonprofit, not-for-profit**

Charitable organizations are referred to as *nonprofits* or *not-for-profits*. They can also be abbreviated to *NFPs*.

### **noon**

Use noon when the time is 12 p.m. exactly. For every minute after, use the numerical version: *12:18 p.m.*

### **number**

Spell out the numbers for zero through nine. Any number from 10 and above, use the numerical version. Always use the numerical version for credits and ages. For numbers larger than 999, use a comma to signify thousands, millions, etc.

## *O*

### **off campus, off-campus**

Use a hyphen when placed before a word as an adjective: *off-campus event*

### **offices, departments**

Academic areas are departments and staff areas are offices: *Nursing Department or Department of Nursing and Office of Student Services or Student Services Office.*

Other formal names include:

Advising and Counseling Center  
Career Development Center  
Welcome Center

### **online**

Should be lowercase and one word

## **p**

### **paragraphs**

All paragraphs should be left justified with no indentation at the beginning.

### **part-time, part time**

Use a hyphen when placed before a word as an adjective: *part-time job*. Otherwise, it is two words: *Danielle works part time at the College.*

### **percent**

For percentages, use the percent symbol when accompanying a number: 99%

### **period**

Use one space after a period at the end of a sentence.

### **phone numbers**

Use dashes between each series of numbers: *863-453-6661*

### **postsecondary**

Postsecondary is used as one word when referring to the education level after high school.

### **principal/principle**

*Principal* can be a noun or adjective that refers to someone's or something's rank, importance, or authority. *Principle* is a noun that means *a truth, law, or motivation*.

## Q

### quotation marks

When using quotation marks, the punctuation remains inside the quotes, but question marks, dashes, semicolons, colons, and exclamation points can appear outside the quotes if they apply to the whole sentence and when the quotation marks are used as the double prime symbol for inches: *The oil painting in MOFAC is 36" x 72"*. Also, use quotation marks around titles of books, movies, etc.: *We watched "Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny" on Saturday.*

## R

### RN

Acronym for Registered Nurse

### RSVP

The widely used acronym for *rezpondez s'il vous plait*, which means *please reply* in French.

### race

Consider if it is necessary before you include a person's race in their description. If it is significant to the information presented, then the race should be capitalized: *Barack Obama was the first Black president of the United States*. Dual-heritage terms are not hyphenated: *African American*.

### rank

To show a rank, use the No. abbreviation for number and not the number sign: *She is No. 1.*

### ratios

Use figures and hyphens: *ratio of 2-to-1 or 2:1; a 2-1 ratio*

### room numbers

Capitalize and use figures: *Room 112 or UC-208*

## S

### SFSC

The acronym for South Florida State College. Periods are omitted.

## **scholarship**

Without a formal title, scholarship is lowercase. However, for named scholarships, it is capital: *Bill Jarrett Automotive Scholarship*.

## **seasons**

The seasons are not capitalized unless they are part of a formal title of an event: *Spring Break*.

## **semesters**

At SFSC, we use term instead of semester for the standard time a course persists.

## **semicolon**

Used to show a break in thought that is more of a pause than a comma but not as divided as a period: *Ashley is very busy today; she has letters to write and meeting minutes to type*. Semicolons can also be used to separate items in lists when commas are present: *The letters are dated May 10, 1955; March 10, 1962; and April 3, 1965*.

## **state of Florida**

State is lowercase and Florida is capital unless it is the formal name of a document or program: *State of Florida High School Diploma*

## **states**

Most states are abbreviated in datelines or text. Exceptions include Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas, Utah, and District of Columbia. Two-letter abbreviations are used as postal codes in full addresses.

## **statutes**

A Florida statute should be written out starting with the capitalized word Section, numerals for chapter and section to follow, the paragraph number and possibly letter in parentheses, a comma, and the abbreviation for Florida Statute: *Section 119.011(5), F.S.*

## **student-athlete**

A student-athlete is an individual who is a current member of an intercollegiate athletic team and is enrolled at the College.

## **Sunshine State**

Florida is referred to as the Sunshine State. This term is capitalized.

# **T**

## **terms**

At SFSC, we use term instead of semester for the standard time a course lasts.

## **textbook**

Textbook is one word and book titles should be capitalized.

## **that/which**

Use *that* for essential clauses and *which* for nonessential clauses, so if you can drop the clause without losing the meaning of the sentence, use *which*, otherwise, use *that*. Also, a *which* clause requires commas and *that* clauses do not.

## **theater**

Theater should have the *er* ending when you mention the location. The alternate, *theatre*, is used for the art form or in the proper name of a location: *Gershwin Theatre*.

## **titles, business and personal**

A generic professional title should be lowercase: *coordinator of special events*. A person's formal title should be lowercase when it follows their name, but capitalized when it precedes the name: *Dr. Michele Heston, vice president of academic affairs and student services at SFSC* or *Vice President Michele Heston*.

## **titles, compositions**

Put quotation marks around book, movie, play, poem, album, song, TV program, lecture, speech, and artwork titles: "*Singin' in the Rain*" or "*Doubting Thomas*."

# **V**

## **URL**

The term *URL* without periods is the acronym for Uniform Resource Locator and can be used instead of using link, web address, or website address.

## **United States**

Our nation can be referred to as *United States* or *U.S.* with periods. *United States of America* or *USA* without periods can also be used.

# **V**

## **voicemail**

Voicemail is one word.

## W

### web

The term *web* is lowercase, as is *website*, *webcast*, *webpage*, *webcam*, *webmaster*, *web address*, and *web browser*. The only exception is the *World Wide Web*. All instances of *www.* before a website should be removed: *southflorida.edu*.

### weeklong

Weeklong is one word.

### which/that

Use *that* for essential clauses and *which* for nonessential clauses, so if you can drop the clause without losing the meaning of the sentence, use *which*, otherwise, use *that*. Also, a *which* clause requires commas and *that* clauses do not.

### work-study

Work-study has a hyphen.

## X

### X-ray

X-ray has a capital X only.

## Y

### year-round

Year-round is a hyphenate.

### years

When a date is displayed, the year should be set off with a comma: *July 7, 2023*. When there is a span of years, the four-digit year and two-digit year should be displayed: *2018-19*. Use an s without an apostrophe when referring to decades or centuries: *1980s*, *1800s*. When figures are omitted, use an apostrophe: *'80s* or *class of '98*. Decades can also be spelled out: *People wore neon clothing in the nineties*.

# Z

## Zoom

The virtual collaboration platform, Zoom, should be capitalized: *I have a Zoom meeting at 3 p.m.*