

# Viterbo University Communications Style Guide

(Revised January 2024)

The Viterbo style guide is designed to keep university internal and external publications consistent. It is not comprehensive, but instead addresses the most frequently questioned issues in non-academic writing.

Among the publications consulted in developing this style are the *Associated Press (AP) Stylebook and Libel Manual* and the fourth edition of the *New American Heritage Dictionary*.

The Viterbo communications office has created this guide for use by all employees. If you have questions about Viterbo University style or this guide, contact communications at 608-796-3037 or [communication@viterbo.edu](mailto:communication@viterbo.edu).

**A or an:** Use “a” before consonant sounds: *a historic event, a one-year term*. Use “an” before vowel sounds: *an MBA*.

**Abbreviations and acronyms:** Do not follow an organization’s full name with an abbreviation or acronym in parentheses or set off by dashes. If an abbreviation or acronym would not be clear on second reference without this arrangement, do not use it. (This is a change from previously published style.)

**Academic Degrees:** Do not use periods when abbreviating degrees. Incorrect: *Jane Doe, Ph.D.* Correct: *Jane Doe, PhD, is working on that research.* (This is a change from previously published style.)

Use academic degrees and abbreviations only when it is necessary to establish someone’s credentials. In most cases, mentioning academic degrees and title is not needed for internal communication. It is most appropriate for new hires, promotions, and for use in professional, academic circles. When you need to refer to a degree, avoid an abbreviation and use, instead, a phrase such as: *Mort Morehouse, who has a doctorate in psychology, gave the lecture.*

When listing several people with advanced degrees for use in professional circles, you may use abbreviations: *Apryl Denny, PhD; Keith Knutson, PhD; and Marlene Fisher, PhD.*

Never precede a name with a courtesy title and follow it with the degree abbreviation in the same reference. Incorrect: *Dr. Mike Collins, PhD.* Correct: *Dr. Mike Collins, a chemist.*

The title “Dr.” should only be used in conjunction with a medical degree. Exceptions are permitted when it is necessary in professional circles and when the discipline is identified. See **President**.

Regarding capitalization of degrees: the complete and formal name of a degree should be capitalized: *Master of Science in Nursing degree*. If an abbreviated version, or an incomplete form of a degree is being used it is not capitalized: *Ann Doe received a master’s degree in nursing.*

When listing a degree after a person’s name, it should be done as follows: *Sue Smith, who earned a Master of Science in Nursing degree from Viterbo University, is working at Mayo Clinic* (no “apostrophe

s” on Master). Or: *Ann Doe, who has a bachelor’s degree in chemistry, is pursuing her medical degree.*  
Or: *John Doe, who has a master’s in educational leadership was promoted (with an “apostrophe s”).*

It is *associate degree* (no “apostrophe s”), but, *master’s degree, bachelor’s degree*. Plural versions are *master’s degrees, bachelor’s degrees, associate degrees*.

Examples of common degree abbreviations:

- BA – Bachelor of Arts
- BBA – Bachelor of Business Administration
- BFA – Bachelor of Fine Arts
- BM – Bachelor of Music
- BS – Bachelor of Science
- DSW – Doctor of Social Work
- EdD – Doctor of Education
- JD – Doctor of Law
- MA – Master of Arts
- MAE – Master of Arts in Education
- MASL – Master of Arts in Servant Leadership
- MBA – Master of Business Administration
- MEPD – Master of Education Professional Development
- MFA – Master of Fine Arts
- MLIS – Master of Library and Information Science
- MM – Master of Music
- MS – Master of Science
- MSCMD – Master of Science in Community Medical Dietetics
- MSE – Master of Science in Education
- MSMHC – Master of Science in Mental Health Counseling
- MSN – Master of Science in Nursing
- MSW – Master of Social Work
- MSSW – Master of Science in Social Work
- PharmD – Doctor of Pharmacy
- PhD – Doctor of Philosophy
- PsyD—Doctor of Psychology

When using abbreviated degrees in a listing, include “in” between degree and subject: *MS in school counseling, MA in education*; Do not list as *MS school counseling, MA education*.

**Accepted Student Visit Day** (the event): No “s” on student.

**Addresses:** Use abbreviations Ave., Blvd., and St. only with numbered addresses: *900 Viterbo Dr*. Spell them out and capitalize when part of a formal street name without a number: *Winnebago Street*. Lowercase and spell out the word when used alone or with other street names: *Winnebago and Jackson streets*.

Spell out and capitalize “First” through “Ninth” when used as a street name. Use numerals for 10<sup>th</sup> and above. Abbreviate compass points used to indicate directional ends of a street in a numbered address: *244 Third St. S., 335 E. 42<sup>nd</sup> St., 600 Main St. SW* (no periods in SW). Do not abbreviate if the number is omitted: Third Street South, East 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, Main Street Southwest.

Postal state abbreviations are for use only with numbered addresses (see **States**): AL, AK, AZ, AR, CA, CO, CT, DE, FL, GA, HI, ID, IL, IN, IA, KS, KY, LA, ME, MD, MA, MI, MN, MS, MO, MT, NE, NV, NH, NJ, NM, NY, NC, ND, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VT, VA, WA, WV, WI, WY.

**Adjunct Faculty:** Individuals hired at Viterbo as adjunct faculty are only referred to as: *adjunct faculty* or *an adjunct faculty member*; not: *adjunct instructor*, *adjunct professor*, etc.

**Admissions:** The proper reference is plural (with an “s”): *admissions*, *transfer and adult admissions*, *international admissions*, *graduate admissions*. Do not use “Office of...” for any of these.

**Adult-Gerontology:** When used in reference to graduate programs in nursing at Viterbo, use a hyphen and capitalize both words.

**Advisor:** Advisoror, (not “er”)

**Ages:** Always use numerals: *The girl is 15 years old; the law is 8 years old; the 101-year-old house.*

Use hyphens for ages expressed as adjectives before a noun or as substitutes for a noun: *A 5-year-old boy, the boy is 5 years old. The boy, 7, has a sister, 10. The race is for 3-year-olds. The woman is in her 30s* (no apostrophe).

**Alphabetizing names:** Alphabetize by the first letter of the last name. A hyphenated name is treated as one element and is alphabetized by the first letter of the first last name. For non-hyphenated names alphabetize by the second last name. The following is in correct alphabetical order: *Mary T. James, Susan Moore Johnson, John Klein, Ann Marshall, Jane Moore-Johnson.*

**Alum, Alumna, Alumnae, Alumni, Alumnus:** “Alumnus” refers to a man who has attended a school; “alumni” is the plural version. Use “alumna” in reference to a woman who has attended a school; “alumnae” is the plural. Use “alumni” when referring to a group of men and women who have attended a particular school. “Alum” may be used to casually refer to an individual or group who have attended a particular school.

The proper way to list alumni:

- *John Doe '90* (no comma, and use apostrophe—not an opening single quote)
- *Jane Doe, FSPA '90*
- *Jane Doe, SFSN '90* (Drop the SFSN if alum has more than one degree)
- More than one degree: *Jane Doe '90, '98*

**Amie L. Mathy Center for Recreation and Education:** This is the correct spelling and official name for the building.

**Ampersand (&):** Use the ampersand when it is part of a company's formal name: *AT&T, Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater La Crosse*. The ampersand should not otherwise be used in place of the word "and."

**Anytime or Any time:** Use one word as an adverb meaning "whenever": *You're welcome to visit anytime. Call anytime*. Use two words if including a preposition like "at": *They could call at any time*. Or when you're talking about an amount of time: *Do you have any time to speak to us today?*

**Apostrophe s:** Plural nouns (and plural nouns singular in meaning) ending in "s," add only an apostrophe: *states' rights, the horses' food, measles' effects*. Singular nouns ending in "s," add "apostrophe s": *the hostess's invitation or the witness's answer*. (This is a change from previous guidance calling for only an apostrophe if the next word begins with an "s.")

**Art Exhibits:** Names of art exhibits should be in italics.

**Artist-in-residence:** Lowercase all words unless it begins a sentence, in which case, "residence" remains lowercase. Use two hyphens.

**Athletics:** Note the use of "athletics" as plural in reference to the Viterbo athletics department and the director of athletics. See **NAIA**.

**Bachelor of Arts in Education; Master of Arts in Servant Leadership:** Arts with an "s."

**Black:** Use the capitalized term as an adjective in racial, ethnic, or cultural sense: *Black culture, Black literature*.

**Black(s), white(s):** Do not use either term as a singular noun. For plurals, phrasing such as "Black teachers," "white students," "Black officers" is preferable when clearly relevant: *White officers account for 65% of the police force, Black officers 21%, and Latino officers 15%. The message targeted Black business owners*. The plural nouns "Blacks" and "whites" are generally acceptable when clearly relevant and needed for reasons of space or sentence construction: *He helped integrate housing among Blacks, whites, Latinos, and Asian Americans*.

**Black Lives Matter:** Either "Black Lives Matter" as a noun or "the Black Lives Matter movement" is acceptable. BLM is acceptable on second reference.

**Black box theatre:** No caps on "black box theatre" unless the theatre is named: *LaCroix Black Box Theatre*. See **LaCroix**.

**Board of Trustees:** Always capitalize "Board" and "Trustees"

**Book signing:** Two words, lowercase unless it begins a sentence.

**Book titles:** See **Composition titles**.

**Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater La Crosse:** This is the correct title and way to write it.

**Bright Star Season:** Capitalize all three words.

**Broad field:** Two words, lowercase unless it begins a sentence.

**Brophy Center:** This is the correct name of the building. It is not the Dahl School of Business building, nor should it be referred to as such.

**Building names:** The proper names of buildings should be capitalized: *The class is held in the Reinhart Center.* Capitalize the word “building” if it is part of the formal name: *School of Nursing Building.*

**Cabinet and Deans:** Always capitalize when referring to President’s Cabinet and Deans Advisory Group.

**Cancel, canceled, canceling, cancellation:** Correct spellings of each.

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:** On first reference, use *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.* Precede with *national, federal, or U.S.* if needed for clarity. On second reference, *the CDC* is acceptable and takes a singular verb.

**Contact tracing, contact-tracing:** Hyphenate when it is used to modify a noun: *The state’s contact-tracing efforts.* Two words when it is not: *We need to do contact tracing.*

**Cellphone:** One word, lowercase unless it begins a sentence.

**Century:** Lowercase, spell out numbers less than 10: *the third century, the 20<sup>th</sup> century.*

**Chair:** Capitalize as a formal title before a name: *Biology Committee Chair Jane Doe.* Lowercase when it follows a name: *Jane Doe, Biology Committee chair.* Do not use “chairman,” “chairwoman,” or “chairperson.”

**Charles D. Gelatt Finance Simulation Lab:** This is the correct name and spelling. It is in Brophy Center room 106.

**Class of:** Always capitalize “Class”: *Class of ’58.*

**Class rank:** Use first-year student(s) instead of freshman/men.

**Class year:** For Viterbo University alumni, refer to the year of graduation following the person’s name whenever possible in the first or second mention of their name. Acceptable references are: *Stan Smith ’75; Stan Smith, who graduated in 1975; or Stan Smith, a 1975 graduate of Viterbo.*

**Clubs and organizations:** Capitalize the full name of clubs and organizations: *Enactus, Agape, Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities,* etc. Second references may use “the club,” “the organization,” or the group’s acronym: *WAICU.*

**College and university names:**

Capitalize when part of the proper name: *Viterbo University.* Lowercase university in less formal reference when it stands alone: *The university recently established new admission criteria.*

Capitalize schools within the university: *The School of Education, the School of Nursing.*

Refer to the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse by its full name on first reference and as “UW-La Crosse” on subsequent references. Refer to Western Technical College by its full name on first reference and “Western” on subsequent references. In internal publications, you may refer to them as “UW-L” and “Western” on all references.

For colleges and universities outside of La Crosse, refer to them by their complete name and follow with the state if outside of Wisconsin: *Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.* or *Carleton College, Northfield, Minn.* University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire or University of Iowa-Iowa City does not need city or state because it’s included in the name.

**College of Business, Leadership, and Ethics:** This is the correct wording; note the two comma placements.

**College of Engineering, Letters, and Sciences:** This is the correct wording; note the two comma placements.

**College of Nursing and Health:** This is the correct wording.

**Collins Auditorium:** Use “Collins Auditorium,” not “room 196,” when referring to the room, which is located in the School of Nursing Building.

**Committees:** Capitalize the complete name of a committee: *the Administrative Assembly, the Humanities Committee, or the Recognition Committee*. Do not capitalize if you use the word committee only in reference: *The committee agenda is lengthy*.

**Complement, Compliment:** Complement is a noun and a verb denoting completeness or the process of supplementing something: *The ship has a complement of 200 sailors and 20 officers. The tie complements his suit*. Compliment is a noun or verb that denotes praise or the expression of courtesy: *The captain complimented the sailors. She was flattered by the compliments on her project*.

**Composition titles:** Italicize all titles of literary, musical, and theatrical works, performances, and recordings. This includes books, TV shows, plays, CDs, movies, operas, song titles, works of art, sculptures, record albums, and poetry. See **Lecture, Presentations, Art Exhibits**.

**Conservatory for the Performing Arts:** This is the correct wording.

**Co-sponsor, Co-sponsored:** Use a hyphen and a lowercase “s.”

**Coulee Region Bay Area:** Capitalize all four words.

**Courses:** Capitalize the proper name of courses: *Educational Psychology 215 is held in Brophy Center*. Lowercase all references that do not use the proper title: *He picked up a course in psychology*.

**Critical thinking, Critical-thinking:** Hyphenate when it is used to modify a noun: *Use your critical-thinking skills*. Two words when it is not: *I have some critical thinking to do*.

**Dates:** Use numerals without the ordinal indicator (st, nd, rd, or th). Incorrect: *June 30<sup>th</sup>*. Correct: *June 30*. See **Months and year**. When appropriate include the day of the week and separate from date with a comma. Correct: *Thursday, Sept. 15*.

**Days of the week:** Capitalize them. Spell out the day of the week when both day and date are used together: *Monday, July 15*. Do not abbreviate, except when needed in a tabular format: *Sun, Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat* (three letters, without period, to facilitate tabular composition).

**D.B. Reinhart Institute for Ethics in Leadership:** This is the correct name and spelling. Can be referred to as “the Ethics Institute.” Located within the D.B. and Marge Reinhart Center for Ethics, Science, and Technology. Do not use spaces between “D.B.”

**Decision making, Decision-making:** Hyphenate when it is used to modify a noun: *We need to update our decision-making processes*. Two words when it is not: *We need to do some decision making*.

**Departments and offices:** When referring to Viterbo departments and offices, use lowercase except for words that are proper nouns: *the department of history, the history department, the department of English, the English department, the registrar’s office, etc.*

**Diamond Edition show choir:** Lowercase “show” and “choir.”

**Dick Record Entrance to the Fine Arts Center:** This is the correct wording; dedication was Feb. 6, 2020.

**Dietitian:** Use this spelling; not with a “c.”

**Dining Options:** The Caf, the POD, Einstein Bros. Bagels at Franny's

**Diseases:** Do not capitalize: *arthritis, emphysema, leukemia, pneumonia*, etc. When a disease is known by the name of a person identified with it, capitalize only the individual’s name: *Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinson’s disease*. Do capitalize disease acronyms: *COVID-19, MERS, SARS*.

Avoid expressions such as: *He is battling cancer. She is a stroke victim. She is autistic*. Use neutral, precise descriptions: *He has stomach cancer. She is a stroke patient. She has autism*.

**Distances:** Use numerals for distances: *Social distancing includes staying 6 feet away from other people*.

**Distance learning:** No hyphen. Both of the following are correct: *Schools are turning to distance learning. He is taking a distance learning class*.

**Do’s and don’ts:** This is the correct spelling.

**Doctorate, Doctoral:** Doctorate is a noun. Doctoral is an adjective. You may have a doctorate, or a doctoral degree, but not a doctorate degree. Note that generic degree designations are lowercase, while degrees that refer to specific academic programs are capitalized.

**Educational Doctorate in Counselor Education and Supervision:** This is the correct wording for this degree. EdD is the correct way to abbreviate Educational Doctorate. Less formal is “Doctor of Education in Counselor Education and Supervision.”

**e.g.:** There should always be a comma after “e.g.” This is the abbreviation for the Latin words *exempli gratia* meaning “for example”: *There are a number of different species of fish that are bottom dwellers, e.g., catfish and carp.*

**Einstein Bros. Bagels at Franny’s:** This is the correct name and spelling. (Einstein’s opened August 2013.)

**Email:** One word in Viterbo University publications and materials. No hyphen and a lowercase “e.” When typing out an email address always put it in italics: *ggtemple@viterbo.edu*.

**Emeritus** (singular), **emeriti** (plural): The formal title of certain retiring faculty members who have retained their rank. Emeritus should be used after the formal title: *Professor Emeritus Tim Crane*.

**Esports:** One word, capital “E” and lowercase “s.”

**Ensure, insure, assure:** Use “ensure” to mean guarantee: *Steps were taken to ensure accuracy*. Use “insure” for references to insurance: *The policy insures his life*. Use “assure” to mean to make sure or give confidence: *She assured us the statement was accurate*.

**Face-to-face:** Hyphenate when it is used to modify a noun: *It was a face-to-face meeting*. Two words when it is not: *They met face to face*.

**Face mask:** Two words, lowercase unless it starts a sentence.

**Fr. Conrad Targonski, OFM:** This is the official wording and way to write his name: *Fr. Conrad Targonski, OFM, gave the homily*. You may use the less formal address of “Fr. Conrad” for internal audiences.

**Feast of St. Francis:** Celebrated on Oct. 4. Do not use “Founder’s Day.”

**Fine Arts Center Franciscan Sisters of Perpetuation Adoration Lobby:** This is the correct name. Fine Arts Center FSPA Lobby can also be used. (Dedicated for the renovation and renaming was on Oct. 7, 2019.)

**Fine Arts Center Gallery:** This is the correct name. Incorrect: *Fine Arts Center Art Gallery*.

**Fine Arts Center Kwik Trip Hospitality Suite:** This is the correct name.

**Fine Arts Center Nola Starling Recital Hall:** This is the correct name of the Fine Arts Center’s recital hall. (Dedicated this name in 2017.)

**First class, first-class:** Hyphenate when it is used to modify a noun: *It was a first-class restaurant*. Two words when it is not: *The restaurant was first class*.

**First come, first served:** The past tense form “served” should be used. The term should be hyphenated only when used as an adjectival phrase before a noun. *Seating is first come, first served*. *Seats are available on a first-come, first-served basis*.

**First generation, first-generation:** Hyphenate when it is used to modify a noun: *She is a first-generation student*. Two words when it is not: *He is from the first generation of Irish immigrants*.



**Firsthand:** One word, no hyphen.

**First-year student:** Use a hyphen and a lowercase “y.”

**Founder’s Day:** Written with an “apostrophe s.” Do not use “Founder’s Day” in regard to the Feast of St. Francis (Oct. 4).

**Freewill:** One word, no hyphen: *Freewill offering*.

**Freshman, Freshmen:** Do not use freshman or freshmen when referring to first-year students.

**FSPA:** Periods are not needed when using the acronym for the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. Note: FSPA is already plural so there is no need to add an “s.” See **Religious titles**.

**Full time, Full-time:** Hyphenate when it is used to modify a noun: *She has a full-time job*. Two words when it is not: *She works full time*.

**Fundraising, Fundraiser:** Each one word.

**Good Samaritan:** Lowercase “good,” capitalize “Samaritan”: *good Samaritan*, unless it’s used in a title: *Good Samaritan Hospital*.

**Grade, Grader:** Hyphenate *first-grader, seventh-grader, 10th-grader*; also *first-grade student, 11th-grade classes* are hyphenated as combining forms; but: *She is in the fifth grade*.

**Grade point average:** Abbreviate as “GPA” with no periods: *He graduated with a GPA of 3.8*.

**Gundersen Health System:** This is the correct name and spelling.

**Hawk’s Nest:** With an “apostrophe s”

**Health care:** Two words.

**High-impact practices:** Hyphenate *high-impact*, HIP is acceptable on second reference.

**High quality, high-quality:** Hyphenate when it is used to modify a noun: *This is high-quality fabric*. Two words when it is not: *This fabric is of extremely high quality*.

**Historic, historical:** A historic event is an important occurrence, one that stands out in history. Any occurrence in the past is a historical event.

**Home page:** Two words, lowercase both words unless it begins a sentence.

**Homecoming:** One word.

**Hometowns:** Generally, in news releases and in articles where it’s applicable, we include a student’s hometown: *Jack Jones of Madison placed first in the competition*. Only use the state name when the city

is not located in Wisconsin: *Shirley Smith, from Springfield, Ill., graduated with honors*. However, you may use the state name if you are clarifying a city name that also exists in another state: *Osseo, Wis.* or *Osseo, Minn.*; *Rochester, Minn.* or *Rochester, N.Y.* There is no need to use a state name with major metropolitan cities like Chicago, Minneapolis, Miami, Los Angeles, New York, etc.

**Honorary degrees:** All references to honorary degrees should specify that the degree was honorary: *Jane Doe, PhD, received the Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters last year*. Or, *Jane Doe received an honorary degree last year*. Do not use Dr. before the name of an individual whose only doctorate is honorary.

**Honors Program:** Capitalize both words. Do not use an apostrophe on “Honors.”

**Howard and Lorraine Dahl:** Lorraine has two “r”s

**Identity statement:** Founded by the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, Viterbo is a Catholic, Franciscan university in the liberal arts tradition.

**i.e.:** There should always be a comma after “i.e.,” This is the abbreviation for the Latin words *exempli gratia*, meaning “that is”: *She was given penicillin, i.e., an antibiotic for ear infections*.

**Including but not limited to:** In the phrase “...including but not limited to...” do not use commas before or after the phrase.

**Inclusive Language:** Avoid broad generalizations, labels, and gender-stereotyping. Use *all* instead of *both* when referring to sexes/gender.

For occupations use gender-neutral terms when possible: *chairperson, police officer, firefighter, council member*, etc.

**Inservice:** One word, no hyphen.

**Internet:** Do not capitalize unless it begins a sentence.

**Junior, Senior:** Abbreviate as Jr. and Sr. only with full names of persons. Do not precede it with a comma: *Joseph P. Kennedy Jr., James R. Jones Sr.*

**LaCroix:** No space between the “La” and “Croix”: *Sr. Marie Leon LaCroix Black Box Theatre*. Note the theatre can be referred to as LaCroix Black Box Theatre. No space in the person’s name *Sr. Marie Leon LaCroix* either.

**La Crosse:** When referring to our city, always put a space between “La” and “Crosse.” Do not allow the words to be broken by a return, keep them on the same line.

**La Crosse BoyChoir:** BoyChoir is one word; uppercase “B” and “C.”

**La Crosse Girlchoir:** Girlchoir is one word; uppercase “G.”

**Landline:** One word, not capitalized unless it begins a sentence.

**Leadership at Noon series:** Lowercase the word “series.”

**Lectures, Presentations, Art Exhibits:** Put the name of a lecture or presentation in quote marks: *“Writing in Stone” to open Ethics in Leadership Lecture series.* Put the name of an art exhibit in italics.

**LGBTQ+:** Acceptable in references to community who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning and/or queer; the + can include many other relevant categories including non-binary, allies, transitioning, etc. This is the standard designation used on campus and in publications.

**Lifelong:** One word, no hyphen.

**Lists:** For copy that includes bulleted lists there are several variations on capitalization and punctuation.

Incomplete sentences do not require capitalization or periods at the end:

*I took the following items to class today:*

- *textbook*
- *laptop*
- *packet of index cards for taking notes*

Complete sentences do require capitalization and periods at the end:

*We are required to do the following to complete our course on Shakespeare:*

- *Read seven plays and 20 sonnets.*
- *Keep a journal recording reactions to everything we read.*
- *Write a 20-page report comparing themes in at least two plays.*

When items in the bulleted list complete a sentence, do not capitalize the first word in the bulleted list, but do put a period at the end of each item:

*Students will learn:*

- *how to translate a variety of texts.*
- *to communicate effectively in more than one language.*

**Lock down, lockdown:** Use two words for verbs: *The room needs to be locked down.* One word as a noun or adjective: *The building is on lockdown.*

**Logos:** See the [Brand Guidelines](#) on the communications website for specific instructions on appropriate use of the Viterbo University logo and seal.

**Long term, long-term:** Hyphenate when it is used to modify a noun: *He has a long-term assignment.* Two words when it is not: *We will be looking at this project in the long term.*

**Long time, longtime:** Use two words for a noun phrase: *They have known each other a long time.* One word as an adjective: *They are longtime friends.*

**Majors:** Do not capitalize the name of a major unless it is a proper noun: *Brenda Smith majored in nursing. Jack Jones is an English major.*

**Man-made:** Use a hyphen and a lowercase “m.”

**Master class:** Two words, lowercase both words unless it begins a sentence.

**Maternal/Newborn Simulation Lab:** Correct wording and spelling for this room in the School of Nursing Building.

**Mayo Clinic Health System-Franciscan Healthcare:** This is the correct title for Mayo in La Crosse.

**Military Aligned Student Center:** Do not hyphenate. *Incorrect: Military-aligned Student Center.*

**Mission Statement:** The Viterbo University community prepares students for faithful service and ethical leadership.

**Months and year:** Spell out the name of each month when used alone or with a year. Do not separate the month and year with a comma. Do not use the word “of” between the month and year. *Incorrect: April of 2003. Correct: April 2003.*

When a month is used in conjunction with a date, abbreviate the following months Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., and Dec.: *Fall semester starts Monday, Aug. 28. Spring commencement is Saturday, May 10.*

Dates that occur within the same month should be separated with an en dash rather than “from-to.” *Incorrect: The conference is from July 22 to July 30. Correct: The conference in Chicago is July 22–30.*

When a phrase refers to a month and day within the current year, do not include the year: *The hearing is scheduled for June 26.* If the reference is to a past or future year, include the year and set it off with commas: *Feb. 14, 2025, is the target date.*

In table format, use the following abbreviations without a period: *Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec.*

**NAIA:** National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics. Viterbo is an NAIA affiliate. Reference “Division II” only when specifically referring to basketball as it is the only sport that has two divisions. Also, NAIA Scholar-Athlete.

**NexStar Season:** “NexStar” is all one word with both words capitalized and uppercase “S” in Star.

**Nicknames:** Put in quotes: *Roland “Buzz” Nelson.*

**9<sup>th</sup> Street Singers:** In this case, do not spell out the number nine.

**Nonessential:** One word, no hyphen.

**Nonprofit:** One word, no hyphen.

**North Star Athletic Association Conference:** “North Star” is two words. (Joined this conference effective the 2015–16 academic year.)

**Numerals:**

In general, use Arabic forms: *1, 2, 3, 4, etc.* unless denoting the sequence of wars or establishing a personal sequence for people or animals: *WWII, Richard III.*

In text, the numbers 1–9 should be spelled out: *Sally took seven courses last fall.* For numbers 10 and above use numerals: *Frank has a total of 68 credits.*

Use figures for 10<sup>th</sup> or higher: *eighth, 10<sup>th</sup>*

Ages are in numerals, not spelled out: *a 6-year-old boy; the boy is 6 years old.*

In listings: When using # then use the numeral: *#4.*

“24 hours a day” needs no hyphens.

When referring to distances, use numerals: *6 feet apart.*

**NURSES program:** Viterbo was awarded a \$1.64M grant from the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services Workforce Diversity program. Funds support Viterbo’s Nurses for Underserved Rural Students Seeking Educational Success. It is referred to as the “NURSES program.” Good for the 2017–21 grant period.

**Nursing Center:** This is the correct name for the School of Nursing building.

**Office:** Capitalize office when it is part of a formal name: *Office of the President, Office of the Chancellor, etc.* Lowercase all other uses, including phrases such as: *The business office and financial aid office are in Murphy Center. The director’s office is on first floor.*

**One-on-one:** Use two hyphens.

**Online:** One word, no hyphen.

**On Stage (The FAC program booklet):** Two words; capital “S”

**Out-of-Our-Minds Chamber Music series:** Note the three hyphens; “series” is lowercase.

**Outdoor Athletics Complex:** Use an “s” on Athletics; do not use “Outdoor Sports Complex.”

**Pax et Bonum:** This is the correct spelling of the phrase, which means, “peace and all good.”

**Part time, part-time:** Hyphenate when it is used to modify a noun: *He is working at his part-time job.* Two words when it is not: *He works part time.* Same for **full time, full-time.**

**Percent:** The % symbol should be used when paired with a number (no space between the two) in all contexts including in text, columns, or tables. *The teacher said 80% of the students were in attendance.*

**Period spacing:** Use only one space after a period between sentences. Do not put a space between initials or acronyms/abbreviations: *T.S. Eliot, a.m., p.m.* When using a period with quotation marks, the period is always placed inside the quotes: *She said, "That was a hard test."*

**Plays:** See **Composition titles**.

**Platinum Edition show choir:** Lowercase "show" and "choir."

**Postsecondary:** One word, no hyphen.

**Pounds:** Always write out pounds: *He weighed 180 pounds.* Only use "lbs." in tabular form.

**President:** When referring to the Viterbo University president, the preferred method is *Rick Trietley, Viterbo University president.* You may also use *Viterbo University President Rick Trietley.* See **Titles**.

**Principal, principle:** Principal is a noun and adjective meaning someone or something first in rank, authority, importance, or degree: *She is the school principal. He was the principal player in the trade. Money is the principal problem.* Principle is a noun that means a fundamental truth, law, doctrine, rule, basis for conduct, or motivating force: *They fought for the principle of self-determination. Her principles kept her from stealing despite her poverty.*

**Problem Solving, Problem-solving:** Hyphenate when it is used to modify a noun: *She used her problem-solving skills.* Two words when it is not: *The class focuses on problem solving and innovation.*

**Pronouns:** Avoid assumptions about gender in writing. When writing about a specific person, ask them which pronouns are preferred (e.g., he/him/his, she/her/hers, they/them/theirs). In stories about people who ask not to be referred to by specific pronouns: Use the person's name in place of a pronoun, or otherwise reword the sentence, whenever possible.

When using they/them/their as a gender-neutral pronoun for a person, plural verbs are acceptable: *Sam loves to paint. They take every painting class available on campus.*

**Proseminar:** When used in reference to Viterbo University's graduate education session, one word, no hyphen, capitalized.

#### **Punctuation:**

- **Accent mark:**
  - On a Mac computer: To type an accent mark over a letter as in *Jesús Jambrina*, press "option," "e," and then type the letter that gets the accent mark over it.
  - On a PC press "control," single quote ('), and then type the letter that gets the accent mark over it.
- **Apostrophe:** Use an apostrophe when letters or numbers are omitted: *rock 'n' roll, 'tis the season, the class of '62, the Spirit of '76, the '20s.* Years: use an s without an apostrophe to indicate spans of decades or centuries: *the 1890s, the 1800s.*
- **Colon:** Use one space after a colon.

- **Comma:** Always use a comma in a series of three or more: *balls, bats, and mitts*.
- **Dashes:** There are a variety of different dashes that can be used in punctuating a sentence. Each has its own distinct use. They are:
  - **Em dash (—):** Use an em dash in place of commas (within sentences) on occasion for additional emphasis: *What a terrible thing to have lost one’s mind—or not to have a mind at all.*
    - On a Mac computer: Press “option,” “shift,” “hyphen.”
    - On a PC: Press “control,” “Alt,” “-” (the minus key on the numeric keypad on right side of keyboard).
  - **En dash (–):** Use an en dash between two numbers (i.e., times, dates, scores, ages). The en dash is shorter than an em dash but longer than a hyphen. It represents “to” between numbers and words. Incorrect: *Aug. 3-4, 2006*. Correct: *Aug. 3–4, 2006. 2021–22 academic year.*
    - On a Mac computer: Press “option,” “hyphen.”
    - On a PC: Press “control,” “-” (the minus key on the numeric keypad on right side of keyboard).
  - **Hyphen (-):** Use a standard hyphen to connect words that serve as modifiers: *We are a PC-driven office. John is a 15-year-old boy.*
- **Quotation marks:** Periods and commas always go inside quotation marks: *She said, “I have microbiology class tomorrow.”* The dash, semicolon, question mark, and exclamation point go inside quotation marks only when they apply to the quoted matter: *“Excellent!” he shouted.* They go outside when they apply to the whole sentence. *My roommate thinks my new computer is “very cool”!* For quotes within a quote, use single marks within double marks: *The professor said, “Read the article, ‘Holistic Care,’ for class tomorrow.”* Use quotation marks for titles of presentations: *Stephanie Genz presented “Public Health Nursing Advocacy: Practice and Teaching” at the Wisconsin Public Health Nursing Conference in Madison.*
- **Semicolon:** Use the semicolon to clarify a series that already includes commas: *Our new faculty includes John Doe, sociology; Jane Smith, English; and Vern Lewis, biology.* Link independent clauses (clauses which could stand alone as sentences) with a semicolon: *My thesis was due last week; I turned it in today.*
- **Parenthesis:** Place periods outside of a closing parenthesis if the material inside is not a sentence (such as this fragment). (*An independent parenthetical sentence such as this one takes a period before the closing parenthesis.*)

**Quotes:** When including direct quotations in a story, use the past tense “said” for attribution: *He said, “I can’t wait until graduation.”*

**Real-world:** With a hyphen, not capitalized unless it begins a sentence.

**Reentry, readmission:** Correct spelling, no hyphens.

**Reopen:** No hyphen.

**Reinhart Center:** The correct full name of the building is the D.B. and Marge Reinhart Center for Ethics, Science, and Technology. The D.B. Reinhart Institute for Ethics in Leadership is located within the D.B. and Marge Reinhart Center for Ethics, Science, and Technology. Do not use spaces between D.B.

**Religious titles:**

For FSPA, place the religious order initials behind the last name on the first reference: *Jane Doe, FSPA, will give the opening prayer.* On second reference, omit the first name and place *Sr.* before the last name: *Sr. Doe will give the closing prayer.*

For priests, and other orders of nuns refer to the person by first and last name with *Rev.* or *Sr.* preceding the first name on first reference: *Rev. John Doe* or *Sr. Jane Doe.* On second reference, omit the first name: *Fr. Doe* or *Sr. Doe.*

In both cases, you may use the less formal address of “*Sr. Jane*” or “*Fr. John*” for internal audiences.

**Rooms:**

Capitalize the names of specifically designated rooms or when used in conjunction with the name of a building: *LaCroix Black Box Theatre, Marian Hall Dining Room, Kwik Trip Hospitality Suite.*

For external audiences when referring to a classroom or other room on campus, reference the full building name and room number: *We’ll meet in Murphy Center room 228.* For internal audiences, you may abbreviate the building when referencing the room: *The staff meeting will be held in MRC 228.*

**School colors:** There are three primary colors used in the official Viterbo University color palette that create consistency across the brand: Viterbo red (PMS 201), Viterbo navy (PMS 280), and white.

**School of Education:** This is the correct wording.

**Scholar-athlete:** Use a hyphen and a lowercase “a.”

**Scholars Day:** No apostrophe in Scholars.

**Seasons:** Lowercase: *spring, summer, autumn/fall, winter* and derivatives such as *springtime*, unless part of a formal name: *Winter Olympics.* Lowercase *spring break.*

**Servant leadership:** Lowercase when referring to the major. Do not use a hyphen.

**Service-learning:** Use a hyphen and a lowercase “l.”

**Shelter in place, shelter-in-place:** Hyphenate when it is used to modify a noun: *Authorities issued a shelter-in-place order.* Two words when it is not: *The school urged students to shelter in place.*

**Show choir:** Two words, not capitalized unless it is part of the name.

**Sister:** Capitalize “Sister” when referencing a member of a religious order: *The presentation discussed the hardships overcome by the Sisters who served at ministries overseas.* Always abbreviate *Sr.* as a title preceding a name, *Sr. Jane Doe.* See **Religious Titles.**

**Skogen Family Welcome Center:** Correct wording and spelling. (New August 2019)

**Smartphone:** One word, all lowercase.



**Speech-language pathology:** Use hyphen when modifying a noun. For titles, this “s” and “l” in Speech-Language Pathology can be capitalized.

**Sr. Thea Bowman Center:** Correct name, abbreviate “Sr.”

**State-of-the-art:** Use three hyphens.

**States:**

Spell out the names of the 50 U.S. states when they stand alone. Eight states are never abbreviated: Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas, and Utah. Abbreviate U.S. with periods; do not spell out “United States.”

Use the abbreviations in the box below when in conjunction with the name of a city, town, village, or military base. Also, *Washington, D.C.* (with comma and periods). Add a comma after the state name, unless at the end of a sentence.

Ala.	Conn.	Ind.	Mass.	Mont.	N.M.	Ore.	Tenn.	Wis.
Ariz.	Del.	Kan.	Mich.	Neb.	N.Y.	Pa.	Vt.	Wyo.
Ark.	Fla.	Ky.	Minn.	Nev.	N.C.	R.I.	Va.	
Calif.	Ga.	La.	Miss.	N.H.	N.D.	S.C.	Wash.	
Colo.	Ill.	Md.	Mo.	N.J.	Okla.	S.D.	W.Va.	

For addresses use the postal abbreviations. See **Address** listing.

Only use the state name when the city is not located in Wisconsin: *Shirley Smith, from Springfield, Ill., graduated with honors.* However, you may use the state name if you are clarifying a city name that also exists in another state: *Osseo, Wis. or Osseo, Minn.; Rochester, Minn. or Rochester, N.Y.* There is no need to use a state name with major metropolitan cities like Chicago, Minneapolis, Miami, Los Angeles, New York, etc.

**Stay-at-home:** Use the hyphens when it is used as a modifier: *stay-at-home family man.*

**Strides:** Viterbo University’s alumni magazine title should be capitalized and italicized when referenced.

**Student-athlete:** Use a hyphen and a lowercase “a.”

**Task force:** Two words, lowercase “f.”

**Teamwork:** One word, no hyphen.

**Telephone numbers:** Use 608-222-2222 as the format for off-campus phone numbers or when printing Viterbo phone numbers for an off-campus audience. Use ext. 2222 as the format for on-campus phone numbers as published for an on-campus audience.

**Theatre:** In all Viterbo University references the word should be spelled as “theatre” and not “theater.” The only exception is for proper names: *Dream Theater*.

**Times:**

Use numerals except for *noon* and *midnight*. Use a colon to separate hours from minutes. Always use lowercase and punctuation for “a.m.” and “p.m.” Do not use zeros for times. Examples: *11 a.m.*, *1 p.m.*, *3:30 p.m.*

Avoid redundancies such as *10 a.m. this morning*, *10 p.m. Monday night*, and *12 p.m. noon*. Use *10 a.m. today*, *10 p.m. Monday*, *noon*, etc.

*24 hours a day* (no hyphens).

Spell out numbers under 10 when referring to time periods such as days, weeks, months, years: *six months*, *three days*.

**Titles:** Capitalize and spell out formal titles such as professor, chair, president, dean, etc., when they precede a name: *President Rick Trietley*. Lowercase elsewhere: *The dean issued the final schedule for the year*. Or *Rick Trietley, president, said this academic year was a success*. Lowercase titles that are strictly occupational, such as, *librarian, John Doe*.

**Themes:** Use quotes for theme names: “Seek First to Understand”

**Toll-free:** Use a hyphen and a lowercase “f.”

**Tri-state:** Use a hyphen and a lowercase “s.”

**Trustee Annual Opportunity Fund:** Correct wording and spelling (per President’s Office 2/2/18).

**United States:** Do not spell out. Use “U.S.” with periods: *The group traveled across the U.S. in 2018*.

**University:** See **College and university names**.

**University of Wisconsin:** The University of Wisconsin is a flagship university. Never add the hyphen and the word “Madison.” However, upon second reference it may be referred to “UW-Madison.”

**Up to date, up-to-date:** Hyphenate when it is used to modify a noun: *The up-to-date policy can be found here*. Two words when it is not: *Mr. Smith was brought up to date*.

**Varsity athletics, Varsity Athletics Center:** Note the “s” on “athletics.”

**V-Hawks:** The V-Hawks is the nickname for the athletics teams at Viterbo University. V-Hawks is always spelled with a hyphen.

**Vic V-Hawk:** The official trademark mascot of the Viterbo athletics department. V-Hawk is always spelled with a hyphen and capital “H.” Never use *Vic the V-Hawk* with “the” included.

**Videoconference, videoconferencing, video chat:** Correct spacing and spelling of each.

**Vision Statement:** A Catholic, Franciscan university boldly transforming students and our communities through service, collaboration, and leadership.

**Viterbo Student Nurses Association:** This is the correct title for VSNA.

**Viterbo University Fine Arts Center:** Include “Viterbo University” in front of building names on publications for external audiences. Correct: *Viterbo University Fine Arts Center Main Theatre*. Viterbo University can be omitted for internal audiences such as *Connections*, the employee newsletter, or VU Today.

**Voicemail:** One word.

**Weber Center for the Performing Arts:** This is the correct name and spelling.

**Website:** One word with lowercase letters. Italicize website addresses and email addresses: Go to *www.viterbo.edu/alumni*. Contact Jane Doe at *Jkdoe@viterbo.edu*. (Also: *webcam, webcast, webfeed, webinar, webmaster, webpage*.) But as a short form and in terms with separate words, lowercase: *the web, web address, web browser*.

**Well-being:** Use a hyphen and a lowercase “b.”

**Work life:** Two words, no hyphen.

**Workbook, workday, workforce, workhorse, workout, workplace, workstation, workweek:** All are one word, no hyphens.

**Year:** When a phrase refers to a month and day within the current year, do not include the year: *The hearing is scheduled for June 26*. If the reference is to a past or future year, include the year and set it off with commas: *Feb. 14, 2025, is the target date*. Use an “s” without an apostrophe to indicate spans of decades or centuries: *the 1890s, the 1800s*.

Years are an exception to the general rule in numerals that a figure is not used to start a sentence: *2013 was a very good year*.