

## **MC Digital Signage A to Z Guide, Punctuation Guide and Tips**

(many excerpts from the Creative Services online guide for print)

### **abbreviations and acronyms**

In general, use abbreviations and acronyms in contexts where they are clear to your readers. As a courtesy to readers who might not easily recognize it, provide the abbreviation or acronym immediately following in parentheses.

When persons are referred to by initials only, no periods are needed. For all others, add spacing with initials.

Workforce Development & Continuing Education (WD&CE)

JFK, FDR, LBJ

### **academic courses**

Capitalize specific titles of Montgomery College courses.

BIOL 201, or Biology 201

### **academic degrees** (see also academic titles)

When using the abbreviation, use capital letters and omit the word “degree.”

AA, AAS, AS or associate’s degree, associate of applied science, associate of science; BA, BS or bachelor’s degree, bachelor’s

MA, MS or master of arts, master of science, master’s degree, master’s

EdD, PhD or doctoral degree, doctorate

### **academic subjects**

Do not capitalize an academic subject unless it is the name of a language.

He took biology and English.

### **academic titles**

When including an academic degree or credential, do not use the courtesy title (also called, social title) in the same reference.

Either Judy E. Ackerman, PhD or Dr. Judy E. Ackerman

Professor Andrea Adams has a BFA in painting and an MFA in graphic design.

### **Accommodations - example**

For questions or to request accommodations for physical disability, contact Rick Pires at

[Richard.Pires@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:Richard.Pires@montgomerycollege.edu) or 240-567-7798

### **addresses**

Abbreviations are acceptable.

GT

GBTC

WD&CE

TP/SS

RV

Macklin Tower 123 (no comma needed, or “room”)

Humanities Bldg. 216

The Commons 211

N. Campus Drive

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MT 011

TA 123

Wrong: Room 123, Macklin Tower or 123 Macklin Tower

Address abbreviations: Ave., Bldg., Blvd., Ct., Dr., Hwy., Pkwy., PO Box, Rd., Rm., Sq., St., Terr.

compass points: N, S, E, W, NE, NW, SE, SW

### **adviser**

### **alphabetization of courses**

COMM

TVRA

CMGT

ENGL

### **ampersand (&)**

& may stand in for “and”

### **artwork** (see also, Quotes, Italics, or Nothing?)

Italicize titles of paintings, drawings, and statues.

Grant Wood’s *American Gothic*; Rodin’s *Thinker*

### **audiovisual**

### **Black Box Theatre**

### **board**

Board of Directors (MC Foundation, PIC MC)

Board of Governors (MC Alumni Association)

Board Office

Board of Trustees (Montgomery College)

### **campus**

Capitalize “campus” when preceded by the specific location: use lowercase for plural or generic references.

The dignitaries toured the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus.

Students from all three campuses will participate.

campus’s (singular possessive), campuses’ (plural possessive) (Chicago 7.15)

### **campus offices, buildings, and departments**

GT Campus

RV Campus

TP/SS Campus

GBTC

Wheaton

HU

SA

CF

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### **capitalization:** board, foundation, and institute

Capitalize “board,” “foundation,” and “institute” when used as proper names, but use lowercase for generic or plural references (Chicago 8.18). An exception to this rule is the use of College when referencing Montgomery College on second or subsequent references.

Right: Montgomery College Board of Trustees, Montgomery College Foundation, the Macklin Business Institute

Right: Submit copies to the Board Office.

Right: The board will consider the proposal at the next meeting. The foundation will meet in November. The institute will accept applications in the spring semester.

Wrong: The Board will meet on May 1. The Foundation is soliciting input.

**catalog** (not catalogue), Montgomery College Catalog

**Center for Professional Organization & Development** or CPOD

### **certificate**

Use lowercase.

He received a certificate in technical writing.

**co-chair** (not co-chairperson)

### **co-curricular**

### **collective nouns and their verbs** (e.g., faculty)

When the subject is a collective noun conveying the idea of unity or multitude, the verb is singular.

When the subject is a collective noun conveying the idea of plurality, the verb is plural. (Chicago 5.131)

The committee is meeting on April 1. (unity, singular verb)

The English faculty are debating the issue among themselves. (plurality, plural verb)

### **College, collegewide**

Capitalize “college” only when referring to Montgomery College. The term collegewide remains lowercase, one word in text (no hyphen), except in a headline or title.

The College’s enrollment was up this year.

The president will send a collegewide memo.

**compounds** (in titles) Generally, capitalize both parts of the compound in titles Do not capitalize articles, prepositions, or coordinating conjunctions (and, but, for, or, nor). (Chicago 8.15)

Medium-Sized T-shirts

Anti-intellectual Activities (exception because the first element is merely a prefix or combining form that could not stand by itself as a word (anti, pre, etc.)

### **congressman/congresswoman**

Although not incorrect, avoid using “congressman” or “congresswoman” (the term “congressman” indicates either a senator or representative); instead use Representative or Senator followed by a last name (when applicable) as an introduction. (Chicago 8.21)

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the representative; Chris Van Hollen, representative from Maryland (less preferable, but not incorrect: congressman from Maryland); or Rep. Van Hollen (D-MD);  
the senator; the senator from Maryland; US senator Barbara Mikulski; Senator Mikulski, Democrat from Maryland (or D-MD) Rarely: the congressman; the congresswoman

### **co-op, cooperative**

Cooperative Education & Internship Program

**corequisite** (per Webster's 11th)

### **cosponsor**

### **countywide**

### **coursework**

### **curricula**

Use lowercase, except in a heading or title.

Right: The landscape technology program is offered on the Germantown Campus.

Right: Many nursing courses have prerequisites.

Wrong: He is a Theatre major.

### **currency (see numbers)**

### **dates**

Avoid use of superscript and numerals for events. No year needed. Abbreviate days of the week using first three letters, capitalized then lower case, do not abbreviate March, April, May, June, July

Right: Tuesday, August 23 or Tue., Aug. 23

Wrong: August 23<sup>rd</sup>

### **day care**

### **days of the week**

Spell out when space allows. Abbreviate days of the week using first three letters, capitalized then lower case, followed by a period.

**degree** (see academic degrees)

### **Desktop**

### **elective (lowercase e)**

**emerita** (feminine), **emeritus** (masculine), **emeriti** (plural, masc. or both sexes), **emeritae** (plural, feminine), an honorary designation, does not simply mean "retired" (Chicago 8.27)

Professor Emeritus Day, Professors Emeriti Day and Kehnemouyi

### **English as a Second Language**

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**email** hyphen not required

**entry level (noun), entry-level (adjective)**

### **federal**

Use lowercase, except when used in a heading or title.

federal Pell Grant, federal Perkins Loan

### **fewer/less**

Use less for amounts or mass nouns (e.g., less water). Use fewer for countable things (e.g., fewer students, miles, ideas. (Chicago 5.220). Also: use less with singular nouns (e.g., less money) and fewer with plural nouns (e.g., fewer dollars).

Fewer accidents (a smaller number) were reported than was expected.

Less effort (a smaller degree) was put forth by the organizers, and thus fewer people (a smaller number) attended.

### **First Year Experience**

**foundation**—as in mathematics foundation

### **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**

**freelance, freelancer**

**full-time (adj.)** a full-time worker

**full time (adv.)** working full time

### **fund-raiser, fund-raising (n.)**

We attended the fund-raiser for student scholarships.

Fund-raising is an Alumni Association effort.

**general education program/requirement**

### **General Equivalency Diploma (GED)**

**GPA** (without punctuation)

### **Gudelsky Institute for Technical Education (GITE)**

### **headlines and subtitles**

Do not use all caps for headlines or subtitles.

Capitalize the first and last words, all nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, and subordinate conjunctions. Do not capitalize articles (the, a, an), coordinate conjunctions (and, but, for, or, nor), or prepositions—unless they are the first or last words of the title or subtitle. Use lowercase for the “to” in infinitives.

Luncheon Honors, Introduces Scholarship Donors and Recipients

Macklin Business Institute Students Earn Regional Honors in Business Competition

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### **health care**

### **hearing impaired**

A generic term that includes both hard of hearing and deaf hearing-impaired student (adj.)

**he or she, his or her** (use “or,” not slash he/she, his/her). Changing nouns to their plural form and using “their” is preferable.

**ID** (no periods)

### **Institute**

**international students on student visas (also referred to as F-1/M-1)**

### **Internet**

### **ITI, Information Technology Institute**

Spell out on first reference with (ITI) in parentheses

**IT** or information technology

### **Learning Center Program**

**Lifelong Learning Institute (LLI)**

### **locations**

For generic locations that precede a name or stand alone, use lowercase (when the full campus name is not required). For specific locations, generally use capitalization.

cafeteria, bookstore, library, county, commonwealth of Virginia

Right: Maryland State, state of Maryland, MD, VA, DC

Wrong: State of Maryland, Maryland State, M.D.

**Month** Spell out when space allows. Do not use numerals.

Do not abbreviate March, April, May, June, July

Right: May 31 or Wed., Oct. 30 or Mon., Jan. 17

Wrong: Apr. or APR

**Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation Arts Center, The**

### **Multicampus**

### **Multicultural**

### **Multimedia**

### **MyMC**

**National Institute of Standards and Technology, NIST**

### **Noncredit**

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### **numbers**

Use hyphens (not parentheses) in phone numbers 240-567-5000

Use % symbol 80%

one million; about 50 thousand; exactly 50,218

18-year-olds; an 18-year-old student

70th anniversary

\$5 (not \$5.00); \$1 million

### **online**

**off-site (compound modifier)**

**on-site (compound modifier)**

### **PAC**

**Robert A. Parilla Performing Arts Center, The**

**part-time adj.,**

**part-time worker**

**part time (adv.)** He works part time.

**Paul Peck Humanities Institute (PPHI)**

**Paul Peck Institute for American Culture and Civic Engagement**

### **phone numbers**

Use hyphens throughout (not parentheses or periods).

240-567-5000

### **plurals**

An apostrophe is never used to form the plural of a family name. Capital letters used as words, abbreviations that contain no interior periods, and numerals used as nouns form the plural by adding s. (Chicago 7.6–7.16)

masters of arts, bachelors of science (Chicago, 7.7)

MA's and PhD's, URLs (abbreviation with no interior periods) (Chicago 7.14)

Afghans and Pakistanis

the Joneses (Chicago 7.8)

threes and fours (no apostrophe needed)

thank-yous, dos and don'ts (Chicago 7.13, 7.29)

ifs and buts, maybes, the three Rs (Chicago 7.14)

the 1900s (numeral used as a noun)

**Policies and Procedures** do not abbreviate P & P

### **possessives**

Add an apostrophe and an s to most singular nouns to form the possessive, and only an apostrophe for plural nouns (except for a few irregular plurals that do not end in s). If the noun ends in s, x, or z, add an apostrophe and an s. (Chicago 7.15–7.22) Omitting the s for words ending in s is not recommended (Chicago 7.21) because it disregards pronunciation.

The Rockville Campus's buildings

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The Williamses' new house (Chicago 7.16)  
FDR's legacy, 2010's heaviest snowstorm (Chicago 7.16)  
the United States' mission (Chicago 7.19)

### **postsecondary**

#### **pre**

Do not hyphenate words beginning with pre, except: pre-dentistry, pre-engineering, pre-medicine, pre-medical technology, pre-optometry, pre-pharmacy, and similar words.

prealgebra

prefixes

Do not hyphenate prefixes, generally, but hyphenate when the adjacent letters are duplicated, or the prefix stands alone and when necessary to avoid confusion with other words. When in doubt, it is never wrong to keep a hyphen to avoid misleading or puzzling forms (e.g., re-cover versus recover, un-ionized versus unionized). See also, Chicago 7.85 for "Hyphenation guide for compounds and words formed with prefixes."

semi-independent, ultra- and subsonic vibrations

non-native, anti-intellectual

Note: When the second element consists of more than one word, use an en dash, not a hyphen: pre–World War I (Chicago 6.80)

### **preregistration**

### **prerequisite**

#### **president of the College, College president**

In text, use lowercase president when the phrase follows the president's name—but capitalize when the title directly precedes the name.

Montgomery College President DeRionne P. Pollard spoke at the conference.

DeRionne P. Pollard, president, introduced the keynote speaker.

### **readmission (no hyphen)**

### **recordkeeping**

**reentry** (No hyphen; this is an exception to the guidance for other prefixes.)

**RSVP** (No periods; omit "please." Please is inherent in the literal translation.)

**School of Art and Design at Montgomery College**, or School of Art+Design (SA+D) when name is used as a logo.

### **seasons**

The four seasons are lowercased. (Chicago 8.87)

**Smithsonian Institution** (not Institute)

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### **South Campus Instructional Building** (not Instruction)

**start-up** (noun) a fledgling business enterprise (per Webster's 11th)

#### **state names**

Capitalize state names, or use two letter postal code with no periods.

Right: MD, VA, DC, PA

Wrong: M.D., Md, M.d., D.C., Penn,

#### **statewide**

#### **Student Code of Conduct**

**Student Development** (DS) courses

**Student Insider's Guide** (formerly, Montgomery College Student Handbook)

**student with learning disabilities** (not learning disabled student)

#### **subchapter**

**summer session** (not summer term)

#### **TechLEAP**

**that** (restrictive, use without commas)

**theatre** (when referring to majors and productions at Montgomery College)

**time** There is no need for formality when posting event start and end times. Less punctuation and capitalized AM or PM make it easier to read both from a distance and in walking past.

Right: 1:30 PM or 11 AM

Wrong: 1:30 p.m. or 11:00 a.m.

Use dash and add space between numbers for maximum readability in "to" "from"

Right: **1 – 3 PM** or **9 AM – 12:30 PM**

Wrong: 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. or 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

#### **title**, professional

Capitalize a person's professional title when it precedes the name; use lowercase when it follows the name, regardless of rank or executive level. (Chicago 8.18)

Montgomery College President DeRionne P. Pollard will be the keynote speaker.

President and CEO John Smith will attend the conference.

Barack Obama is the first African American president of the United States.

#### **TV channels, radio and broadcast networks**

the Discovery Channel

MCTV Channel 10

MCTV Channel 998 on Comcast

MCTV Channel 1058 on RCN

WAMU

WKYS 93.9 fm

WMCR e-Radio

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### **United States**

abbreviate **US** (Chicago 10.33)

### **University of Maryland, University of Maryland, College Park**

**UM, UMD, UMCP**

**University of Maryland, Baltimore, UMB, UMBC**

**Universities at Shady Grove, USG**

**URLs** Do not include the leading <http://> or [www](http://www).

Use only a short, easy to remember URL, or social media address, and only if relevant. Do not use URLs with complicated or long addresses, randomly generated characters and numbers

Right: [montgomerycollege.edu](http://montgomerycollege.edu)

[montgomerycollege.edu/mctv](http://montgomerycollege.edu/mctv)

[cms.montgomerycollege.edu/townhall](http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/townhall)

[montgomerycollege.edu/biomedicalscholars/](http://montgomerycollege.edu/biomedicalscholars/)

Wrong:

<http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/edu/tertiary1.aspx?urlid=50>

<http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/paying-for-college/financial-aid/index.html>

### **US (adj.)**

Abbreviated (no periods)

**versus** spell out or abbreviate lower case with period **vs.**

### **vice president and provost**

**visa** (passport endorsement), **VISA** (credit card trademark)

**voicemail** (noun)

### **waitlist**

### **Washington, DC or DC**

**web**, the web, web-based, web-related (adjectives),

web page, website (one word, lowercase)

website, URLs, and email addresses (formatting)

With Internet addresses (URLs), no space follows the period (also known as a dot).

### **who/whom**

Who is the nominative form. Use who whenever he, she, they, I, or we could be substituted in the who clause. Whom is the objective form. Use whom whenever him, her, them, me, or us could be substituted as the object of the verb or as the object of a preposition in the whom clause. If in doubt, mentally rearrange the clause.

which (nonrestrictive) Use which with commas.

Snow, which normally falls in the winter, is pretty at first. (Chicago 6.22) (see also, that)

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### Women's Studies Program

**Workforce Development & Continuing Education** or **WD&CE**, with ampersand  
**Workforce**  
**Workplace**  
**Worksite**

### Punctuation Guide

#### apostrophe (')

Add an apostrophe and an s to most singular nouns to form the possessive, and only an apostrophe for plural nouns (except for a few irregular plurals that do not end in s). If the noun ends in s, x, or z add an apostrophe and an s. (Chicago 7.17–7.18)

An apostrophe is never used to form the plural.

It is used to avoid confusion in plural nouns that are lowercased or are abbreviations. (Chicago 7.14)

The Rockville Campus's building (singular noun ending in s)

the Williamses' new house, but the Joneses (forming a plural, no apostrophe needed)

FDR's legacy

2010's heaviest snowstorm

MA's and PhD's

the three Rs, the 1900s, threes and fours (forming a plural, no apostrophe needed)

straight versus slanted apostrophes

**comma in dates:** In text, insert commas after the date and the year.

He was born on July 11, 1955, in Eugene, Oregon. (Chicago 6.45)

The event will be held on July 11. (not 11th or 11th)

comma in city and state names: Enclose states, provinces, and territories in commas to set it from the rest of the sentence. (Chicago 6.17)

**comma in proper names:** "Jr." is no longer set off by commas; neither is a numeral suffix.

Alan Miller Jr. works at the College; but Henry James II does not. (Chicago 6.47)

**comma in numbers:** Insert a comma in numbers of more than three digits.

1,000; \$2,580

**comma in a series:** In lists of three or more items, use a comma before the word "and" and "or."

They will serve breakfast, lunch, and dinner. (Chicago 6.18)

#### dash (and hyphen)

In typesetting, three distinct symbols are used: hyphen (-), dash (–) also called an en dash, and em dash(—).

hyphen: Use a hyphen in phone numbers and all fractions.

240-567-7000

1 – 3 PM

**en dash:** Use an en dash to indicate a range.

1992–1993

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### Helpful Tips:

Punctuation is not needed for the end of a headline or sub-title, nor a one-liner or footer message

All caps are actually harder to read

Headline will be automatically bolded in the Scala program

Example:

#### **Purple Pride Rally**

Wear Your Raptor Gear

Fri. Sept. 14

1 PM – 5 PM

Students, staff & faculty on all campuses

Submit your photos!

#MC Pride

Indicate if tickets are required or admission has a cost, if not, considering adding:

Event is free and open to the public

Event is free with MC Student ID

Events should include:

Name of event

Date – month and day (do not include year)

Start time and end time

Location – campus building and room

Cost or free

Public or group invited

Short URL, or social media address if relevant

Call to action, such as RSVP, purchase tickets online, etc.

Example:

#### **Salute MC Student Athletes**

Sophomore Night & Awards Presentation

Sat. February 4

7 – 9 PM

RV Campus, PE Large Gym

Free and open to the public

Format:

There are a variety of templates to choose from in the Scala program.

Depending on the template, you may be able to choose text to be left justified, right justified or centered as works best with each design.

Colors & Fonts:

The colors for backgrounds and text are set to meet the new MC Brand Guidelines. The font is restricted to the College approved font for consistency in branding as well as maximum readability.

Timing:

Slides can appear for a minimum of 10 seconds and a maximum of 25.

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### **Strategy:**

Digital signage is just one medium for promoting events and providing information to college constituents. The visual nature of digital signage and best practices support the use of color, photos, images, icons, and video mixed with a minimum amount of text. Expanded narrative and heavy text are more appropriate for printed materials or websites.