

Journalism Style

Abbreviations and Acronyms

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In general, avoid any abbreviation or acronym that readers would not immediately understand.

- The ABEA awarded Ms. Scott with a Certificate of Merit.

What is ABEA?

- If using an unfamiliar abbreviation or acronym, spell out the entire phrase the first time it is used in a news story. Then you may use the abbreviation.

Always spell out the full term on first reference and then use the acronym on future references in the same story.

- The Future Business Leaders of America went to a national conference in March. FBLA members presented a workshop on team building skills.

Do not follow an organization's full name with an abbreviation or acronym in parentheses or set off by dashes. If the abbreviation is not clear – DO NOT USE IT.

Do not use periods between abbreviations and acronyms.

- FBLA will hold their meeting Friday.

Do not say F.B.L.A. will hold their meeting Friday.

Do not use school abbreviations at all – unless needed to make the story clear. Never use your school abbreviations in copy.

- BHS' prom will be Friday night. Correct – The prom will be Friday night.
- Several of BHS' students will attend Benton High School's prom on Friday night. – In this case, the use of BHS for the local school name is allowed to help make it clear those students will attend a different school's prom.

In the case of sports stories, use the school mascot when you need to refer to the team.

- The Hornets gained 20 yards on the Benton fumble.

Spell out all abbreviations (except Dr., Mr., Mrs., or Ms.) before a name when used in direct quotations.

- Wooldridge said, "Professor Sanders encouraged us to try our hardest.

Abbreviate most titles when used before a full name outside of a direct quotation.

- Smith said Prof. Plopper would give the test on Friday.

Do not abbreviate any titles that do not follow before a name.

- The professor went to his class.

Abbreviate months with five or more letters when used in dates.*** The date must include the year.

- The band will perform on March 15.
- The football team won their last championship on Dec. 18, 1969.

Abbreviate avenue, boulevard, and street when writing a specific address. Spell out all other words. Spell out all words if not used in a specific address.

- The dance will be held at 115 South Main St. but the after dance party will be at 178 North Windy Circle.

Do not abbreviate units of measurements.

- The team only had six inches to go to get the touchdown.

Do not use the abbreviation etc. in news stories.

Members prepared spaghetti, bread, salad, etc. for dinner.

Instead: Members prepared spaghetti, bread, salad and other items for dinner.