AP Style Guidelines

The basic style rules for AP format

• Capitalization
  o Formal titles, not job descriptions or job positions, should be capitalized before the name then lower case after the name
    ▪ Ex. Lieutenant John Doe was offered a promotion this morning
    ▪ Other formal titles can be political titles, military titles, and more
  o Only capitalize common nouns when they are part of a proper name
    ▪ Ex. Party, river or street
    ▪ Ex. the Democratic Party
  o Capitalize specific geographic regions or popular names for those regions
    ▪ Baltimore or “Charm City,” had

• Punctuation
  o Do not use apostrophe s (‘s) for plurals or multiples of numbers or letter combinations
    ▪ Ex. 1980s
  o AP style is to use dashes instead of bullets for list that come after a colon
    ▪ Ex. I was worried about three problems- money, space and time.
  o The first word that comes after a colon needs to be capitalized only if it is a proper noun or the beginning of a complete sentence
    ▪ Ex. There were few to blame here: the administration, for one, had the most…
  o Do not use a comma before a conjunction
    ▪ Ex. Neither the man nor the woman was guilty.
  o Avoid using parentheses as much as possible. If necessary, the rules are that if the sentence in the parentheses is complete, place the period inside; if it is not complete, then it goes outside
  o There should only be one space after the end of a sentence
    ▪ Ex. …had been placed.
  o Semicolons are used to refine series that includes a number of commas.
    ▪ Ex. The rules were as such – no fishing; no horseplay; no
  o Use only one space between sentences
    ▪ Ex. Only one had been placed. The administrator….

• Quotation Marks
  o Do not use quotation marks for emphasis
    ▪ Ex. This had been the only time Action Bronson reviewed food on Bon Apetit.
  o Single quotation marks should only be used a quote within a quote.
    ▪ Ex. “I said then, ‘This was the only way to fix the pipeline.’”
  o You should always place periods, commas, question marks, exclamation points, etc. inside the quotation marks
    ▪ Ex. Place them outside when they apply to the whole sentence
- Dates, days and times
  - Always use Arabic figures; stay away from using st, nd, rd, th
    - Ex. March 10, 2018
  - Abbreviate the month when it is used with a specific date
    - Ex. Oct. 15
  - When only the month and year is listed in any sentence or text, spell it out; do not separate the month and year with a comma
    - Ex. Mary comes home October 2018
  - When a sentence or phrase mentions a month, day and year, separate the year with commas
    - Sept. 10, 2018, was the last day to register for classes.
    - Use a.m. or p.m. (Use periods)

- Names
  - Address a person by their first and last name the first time you mention them and after that, address them by their last name without a title.
    - Ex. …the least of which had been the domain of Shah Ayatollah Khomeini. In this regard, Khomeini…
  - You do not need to use courtesy titles unless you are inserting a direct quote or trying to recognize between different people
    - Ex. Mr., Mrs., Ms

- Numbers
  - Always spell out number one through ten and use figures to represent numbers 11 and on
    - Common exceptions include:
      - Addresses
        - 15621 Silvertree lane
      - Times
        - Even numbers should not be followed by a colon and two zeros. Ex. 8 p.m.
      - Speed
        - Ex. 4 mph
      - Percentages
        - Percent is spelled out. Ex. 5 percent
      - Ages
        - Ex. Casey is a 19-year-old girl
      - Temperature
        - 71 degrees or 71 F
      - Highways
      - Dates
        - September 4 not September 4th
      - Money
        - Do not include a period and two zeros. Ex. $40
• Titles
  o Formal titles should be capitalized and abbreviated
    ▪ Ex. Gov., Sen., Dr.
  o Formal titles should be capitalized when they come before a person’s name
    ▪ Ex. President Barack Obama
  o Formal titles can be lowercase if they are informal or do not have a person’s name following it
    ▪ Ex. The NAACP chapter president had said
  o Magazine titles, reference works, and newspaper should not be treated with special treatment
    ▪ Ex. An editor at the Times remarked,
  o Titles of books, movies, tv shows etc. should have quotation marks with each first letter of the word capitalized
    ▪ Ex. “To All The Boys I’ve Ever Loved”