

**\*\*\*Last revised on Oct. 10, 2019\*\*\***

## ABBREVIATED CCA EDITORIAL STYLE GUIDE

This guide provides key CCA style rules. For further support, please refer to our [comprehensive CCA Editorial Style Guide](#) or contact [diy@cca.edu](mailto:diy@cca.edu) with questions.

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## ESSENTIAL GRAMMAR

### Plain language

CCA follows plain language standards whenever possible. Plain language is a style of writing that is clear, concise, and well-organized. [View more rules for PLAIN LANGUAGE](#)

**Why?** It helps your audience find what they need, understand what they find, and use what they find to meet their needs.

**How?** Use “you” pronouns when appropriate, active voice (who did what to whom), short sentences, common words, and easy-to-read design features, and organize ideas logically and with the reader in mind.

### Tense

Default to the present tense whenever possible.

**Why?** It conveys immediacy and possibility and helps the audience connect with us by placing them within our present context.

**Exceptions?** It’s better to use other tenses than write something convoluted. When possible, write course descriptions in the present tense, not the future tense.

**How?** See examples below.

Chair Josh Faught **combines** textiles and fiber with found cultural objects. [NOT: Chair Josh Faught **has combined** textiles and fiber with found cultural objects.]

**Make** the city your urban laboratory [NOT: CCA students **made** the city an urban laboratory]

Students **experiment** with many forms of textile construction. [NOT: Students **will experiment** with many forms of textile construction.]

In this course, students **learn** essential techniques of character animation. [NOT: In this course, students **will learn** essential techniques of character animation.]

### Use of you and we pronouns

We prefer the less formal second-person pronoun (you, your, yours) when referring to the reader or listener, though this can vary depending on the audience. It’s OK to use, but not over-emphasize, the first-person pronoun “we” when referring to CCA as an institution. Whenever possible, avoid referring to CCA in the third-person.

## Contractions

We use contractions to give our writing a friendly tone. Contractions are ideal in our web writing and marketing materials; however, a contraction might be inappropriate in a speech by the president. Use your discretion.

As a general rule, use a contraction for the [modal verb](#) when making a negative statement. For example, “I haven’t gone there” is easier for non-native English speakers to understand than “I’ve not gone there.” Avoid contractions in double-negatives (e.g., “I can’t not do that”), as they’re especially confusing for non-native speakers. (It’s best to avoid double-negatives in general.)

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## HEADLINES AND SUBHEADLINES

In print, social media, advertising, and most website content, only the first word of headlines should be capitalized, and no terminal punctuation should be used. Exceptions: when typographic treatments call for ALL CAPS, the headline ends in an exclamation point or question mark, and evergreen page headlines on cca.edu, which should be in title case. [View more rules for HEADLINES AND LISTS](#)

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## PUNCTUATION

### Serial comma

Use the serial comma, also known as the Oxford comma, before the last item in a series of three or more items.

The student thanked her parents, Nietzsche, and God. [NOT: “The student thanked her parents, Nietzsche and God,” which implies that Nietzsche and God were the student’s parents.]

### Spacing

Put one space, not two, between sentences, after colons and semicolons, and around ellipses.

### Colons

Use a colon to offset a list in body copy. Capitalize the first word after the colon in body copy only if it’s a proper noun or the start of a complete sentence. Use a colon before a vertical list of items only if the sentence that precedes the colon is a complete sentence.

### Alphabetization

In lists of people’s names, the “last name” of a woman who retains and uses her maiden name is the second and third names combined. So, Kay Kimpton Walker is alphabetized under “K.”

In lists of organization names, if a full name or family name is part of a *foundation* name, alphabetize by the family's last name. If a full name is in the *business* name, alphabetize by the first substantive word (for instance, disregard "A" and "The").

### **Ampersands**

Don't use ampersands unless one is part of a brand name or company.

### **Apostrophes for proper nouns that end in "s"**

For the formal name of a singular entity that ends in a plural word, we only use the apostrophe, not apostrophe s, when making that noun possessive.

California College of the Arts' campus expansion  
General Motors' partnership with CCA's Interaction Design program  
The series references the United States' wealth creation practices

### **Terminal punctuation**

Don't use terminal punctuation in headlines or subheadings unless it's a question mark. Use "and" when space allows; if we must use a symbol for "and," use the plus sign "+" instead of an ampersand "&" to maintain our style across our print and digital platforms. It's only OK to use an ampersand in a headline or subheading if it's part of a brand or company name.

In numbered and bulleted lists, only use terminal punctuation if one or more items in the list is two or more sentences long. If all items in a list are one sentence or less (eg, one word, a few words, a sentence fragment, etc), only use terminal punctuation if it's a question.

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## **ALUMNI DESIGNATIONS**

Use **alumni** to refer to multiple graduates, **alum** to refer to a singular graduate.

When listing alumni degrees in parentheses after names, list the degree awarded, program, and year graduated. No commas between program and year, and no "in"s between the degree awarded and the program.

Use the following conventions:

### **Undergraduate**

Jane Doe (BFA Illustration 1998) [note: no periods in a degree title]  
Mike Bert (BArch 2008)

### **Graduate**

Lois Lane (MFA Fine Arts 1938)  
Chevy Glover (MArch 2010, MAAD 2014)

Sally Draper (MA Visual and Critical Studies 1983) [spell out “and”]

### Multiple degrees

John Dough (BFA Illustration 1936, MFA Fine Arts 1938) [undergraduate, graduate]

Tank Thompson (MFA Fine Arts, MFA Writing 1993) [multiple degrees that aren’t a dual degree are separated by a comma]

### Dual degrees

Erin Kirk (MBA Design Strategy and MFA Design 2018) [use “and” instead of a comma]

Peter Parker (MA Visual and Critical Studies and MA Curatorial Practice 2007) [list degree earned (such as MA in this example) twice even if it’s the same degree from each program]

To correctly identify the degree title in parentheses, [reference “degree earned”](#) in the divisional program section of the comprehensive CCA Editorial Style Guide.

It’s fine to use outdated program names in alumni parenthetical statements in order to align with the programs from which the individual graduated, even if that program name has since been phased out or has a new name (e.g., Printmaking v. Printmedia; Painting/Drawing v. Painting and Drawing).

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## PUBLICATIONS, CAPTIONS, AND CREDITS

### Publication and exhibition formatting

**Italicize:** Titles of artworks, movies, music albums, books, magazines, newspapers, television and radio shows, and individual exhibitions. (On social media platforms or other channels that don’t allow for italization formatting, use quotation marks for these items.)

**Put in quotation marks (double quote “”):** Titles of articles, short stories, poems, songs, and thesis projects. When a publication title begins with “the,” don’t capitalize or italicize “the” (e.g., *the New York Times*).

**No formatting:** Recurring exhibition titles (such as annual exhibitions), and biennials and triennials when speaking about them generically and not an individual instance of the biennial or triennial.

### Checklist style (for gallery labels)

Checklist style is an artwork description format used for the plate section of books or magazines and **for gallery labels**. Applicable copyright and photography credits can be omitted and included in a separate credits page if preferred. Each detail is on its own line.

The basic checklist style format is:

Artist’s name

*Title of work, date* [note italicization title of work]

Medium

Edition [if applicable]

Dimensions [if desired]

Credit line [if applicable]

Zach Brozman  
*Auto-Seance #3: Serving Water to a Ghost*, 2014  
Sculpture installation  
30 x 26 x 26 inches

Craig Baldwin  
*Cross References*, 2007  
16-millimeter film, color, silent, 3:02 minutes  
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

Sandow Birk  
*Pleasant Valley State Prison, Coalinga, CA*, 2000  
Oil and acrylic on canvas  
24 x 36 inches  
Courtesy of the Koplin del Rio Gallery, Culver City, California

Andrea Bowers  
*The Names Project Book Displayed*, 2007  
Digital archival prints  
36 prints, each 18 x 12 inches  
Courtesy of the artist and Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects

Jay Chung and Q Takeki Maeda  
*Untitled*, 2007  
Offset lithographic prints  
Seven parts, three 26 x 33 inches and four 18 x 24 inches  
Courtesy of the artists and Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin

### Run-in style (for captions)

Run-in style is a caption style that is perfect **for printed or digital pieces**, such as email and social media, that are typically designed for short-term use. Examples include biannual alumni email newsletters, *Glance* magazine, social media captions, CCA.edu captions, printed invitations, and awards exhibition brochures. This style creates short captions that look good and save us valuable printing space. Instead of starting a new line for each detail as in checklist style, copy appears continuously, separated by punctuation.

The basic run-in style format is as follows:

Artist's Name, *Title of Work*, Year. Medium, Dimensions. Copyright. Photo by or courtesy of Credit.

Jennine Scarboro, *Doll-parts: Arm*, 2008. Acrylic on paper, 11 x 14 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Lea Zaglin, *Untitled*, from the series *Time is Making Fools of Us Again*, 2015. Inkjet print, 35 x 23 1/3 inches. Photo by Lea Zaglin.

Gabe Laughlin, *Plate with tree*, 2014. Terracotta, 2 x 10 x 10 1/8 inches. Photo by Maggie Beasley/CCA.  
[Note: The title of the work is not italicized here because it is an example of an artwork without a title; the style rule for cases like this (when use either checklist or run-in style) is to establish a simple, descriptive sentence case title and not italicize]

Rules for writing artwork captions or labels in checklist and run-in style		
TOPIC	RULE	EXAMPLES
Alphabetization	In lists, organize artworks in alphabetical order by artist last name. If there are multiple works by a single artist, put them in chronological order, with the earliest first.	<p>Craig Baldwin <i>Cross References</i>, 2007 16-millimeter film, color, silent, 3:02 minutes San Francisco Museum of Modern Art</p> <p>Craig Baldwin <i>Cool Cats</i>, 2008 16-millimeter film, color, silent, 5 minutes San Francisco Museum of Modern Art</p> <p>Sadow Birk <i>Pleasant Valley State Prison, Coalinga, CA</i>, 2000 Oil and acrylic on canvas 24 x 36 inches Courtesy of the Koplin del Rio Gallery, Culver City, California</p> <p>Zach Brozman <i>Auto-Seance #3: Serving Water to a Ghost</i>, 2014 Sculpture installation 30 x 26 x 26 inches</p>
Dimensions	<p>Always use numerals for dimensions, even if less than 10.</p> <p>Don't abbreviate dimensions. "Inches" is always spelled out; we don't include centimeter dimensions. Spell out the word "minutes" or "hours" or "seconds."</p> <p>Use fractions instead of decimal points.</p> <p>Use a lowercase x with spaces between for suspended dimensions.</p> <p>Don't list dimensions for films or videos unless the projection/display is always of a particular size.</p>	<p>Craig Baldwin <i>Cross References</i>, 2007 16-millimeter film, color, silent, 3:02 minutes San Francisco Museum of Modern Art</p> <p>Jay Chung and Q Takeki Maeda <i>Untitled</i>, 2007 Offset lithographic prints Seven parts, three 6 x 3 inches and four 18 x 24 inches Courtesy of the artists and Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin</p>

Photography medium	For photographs, always specify “chromogenic print,” “gelatin silver print,” etc., unless the type is unknown, in which case use “photograph.”	Andrew Adams. <i>When Nature Calls</i> , 1965. Photograph, 25 feet x 25 feet. Courtesy of the artist and Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects.
Colors	Never use colors in medium lines unless for a film or projection (e.g., don’t write “red paint” or “black-and-white photograph”).	Abigail Child <i>The Future Is Behind You</i> , 2005 DVD projection, black and white, sound, 21 minutes Courtesy of the artist
Performance art medium	Italicize the title of the performance and include a photographer credit.	Abby Crain and Mara Poliak in <i>Swimming Pool</i> . Photo by Chani Bockwinkel.
Artwork detail	In parentheses, indicate that the image is a detail after the year.	John Akomfrah, <i>Vertigo Sea</i> , 2015 (detail). © Smoking Dogs Films. Courtesy of the Lisson Gallery, Seattle.
Installation view	Include “installation view” in parenthesis after title of work and the name of the institution where the installation view was photographed.	Alexander Calder, <i>Scaling Up</i> (installation view, SFMOMA), 2017. Photo by Katherine Du Tiel.
No title v. Untitled	If a lack of title is intentional, italicize it. If an object is given a status as a work of art without a title, establish a simple, descriptive sentence case title (as seen in this last example of “Plate with tree”).	Lea Zaglin, <i>Untitled</i> , from the series <i>Time is Making Fools of Us Again</i> , 2015. Inkjet print, 35 x 23 1/3 inches. Photo by Lea Zaglin.  Gabe Laughlin, <i>Plate with tree</i> , 2014. Terracotta, 2 x 10 x 10 1/8 inches. Photo by Maggie Beasley/CCA.
Artwork from a series	Add a comma after the title of the work, include “from the series,” and italicize the series name.	Susan Meiselas, <i>11:00 am “Drop site” of Interstate 5, Oceanside, California</i> , from the series <i>Crossings</i> , 1989. Printed 2011.
Media credits still	Include “still” in parentheses after the year.	Bruce Conner, <i>BREAKAWAY</i> , 1966 (still). San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Accessions Committee Fund purchase. © Conner Family Trust, San Francisco.
“Collection of” in credit line	In the collection credit line, omit “collection of” if the work is in a museum collection; simply list the name of the institution. List the	Craig Baldwin <i>Cross References</i> , 2007 16-millimeter film, color, silent, 3:02 minutes



	city and/or state/country of the lending institution unless its name makes the designation unnecessary.	San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
Copyright symbol	When copyright is called for, use the © symbol before the credit line.	John Akomfrah, <i>Vertigo Sea</i> , 2015 (detail). © Smoking Dogs Films. Courtesy of the Lisson Gallery, Seattle.
Crediting a photo by a CCA staff member	Follow credit protocol, but add a slash CCA with no spaces after the last name.	Gabe Laughlin, <i>Plate with tree</i> , 2014. Terracotta, 2 x 10 x 10 1/8 inches. Photo by Maggie Beasley/CCA.

### Caption punctuation

Use terminal punctuation for all complete sentences, even if the caption is only one sentence long. If it's not a complete sentence, don't use terminal punctuation.

### Formatting list of name captions

Image captions that only list people in the photograph should be formatted as “L to R: First Last, First Last, and First Last” without terminal punctuation.

### Parentheses in captions

Only use parentheses to indicate where people are in the photo if absolutely necessary.

Ceramics Associate Professor Nathan Lynch (left) and Oikonos board member Grant Ballard (right) install a seabird nest prototype on Año Nuevo Island.

### Crediting images

<i>TOPIC</i>	<i>RULE</i>	<i>EXAMPLE</i>
Crediting a provided photograph	Format for crediting a provided photo is “Photo courtesy of Name.”	Valencia 826 offers literacy courses for disadvantaged community members. Photo courtesy of Valencia 826, San Francisco.
Crediting a provided photograph by a lending institution	List the city and/or state/country of the lending institution unless its name makes the designation unnecessary.	Valencia 826 offers literacy courses for disadvantaged community members. Photo courtesy of Valencia 826, San Francisco.

Crediting a provided photo by a photographer	Format for crediting a photo by a photographer who is not a CCA staff member: "Photo by First Last."	Valencia 826 offers literacy courses for disadvantaged community members. Photo by Bob Barker.
Crediting a photo by a CCA staff member	Format for crediting a photo by a CCA staff member: "Photo by First Last/CCA."	Gabe Laughlin, Plate with tree, 2014. Terracotta, 2 x 10 x 10 1/8 inches. Photo by Maggie Beasley/CCA.
Collection of in credit line	In the collection credit line, omit "collection of" if the work is in a museum collection; simply list the name of the institution.	Craig Baldwin, <i>Cross References</i> , 2007. 16-millimeter film, color, silent, 3:02 minutes. San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.
Copyright symbol	When copyright is called for, use the © symbol before the credit line.	John Akomfrah, <i>Vertigo Sea</i> , 2015 (detail). © Smoking Dogs Films. Courtesy of the Lisson Gallery, Seattle.
Formatting a hero photo credit on EDU	Format for crediting a hero photo with no caption starts with "Photo by" and does not receive terminal punctuation.	Photo by Nicholas Lea Bruno/CCA

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## DATES, DAYS, AND TIMES OF THE WEEK

### Dates

No comma is needed between a month or semester name and the year. Do not capitalize "fall," "spring," etc.

September 2002

fall 2006

She starts classes in the fall.

He joined CCA during summer 1979.

Use an en-dash to indicate date and year ranges. Never use st, nd, rd, or th after a date. Use a comma after the date numeral and the year numeral when written out in body copy. When the

date appears in the middle of a sentence, commas should appear both before and after the year. Always spell out the full month name.

On September 1, 2019, we will open the new gallery.

The space opened on March 15.

The next staff picnic will be in October 2019.

September 1–2, 2003 [or September 1 and 2, 2003]

March 25–June 10, 2004 [or March 25 through June 10, 2004]

November 15, 2002–January 10, 2003 [or November 15, 2002, through January 10, 2003]

the classes of 1967–72

the 2006–2007 school year

the winter of 1999–2000

In the rare case that you are restricted by limited design space or web component variables, use the following abbreviations (three letters, without periods): Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, and Dec.

### **Days of the week**

Spell out days of the week. When the day of the week is provided before the complete date, the day of the week should be followed by a comma.

The gallery closed its doors for good on Wednesday, October 15, 1958, after a long celebration of its legacy.

The gallery closed on Wednesday after a long celebration.

In the rare case that abbreviations are necessary, use the following (three letters, without periods): Sun, Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, and Sat.

### **Times**

Use numerals and “am” or “pm” without punctuation to designate a specific time. Put a space between the time and the am or pm. Use an en-dash in time ranges.

10 am–4:30 pm

6:15–1 pm

The lecture begins promptly at 7 pm.

Use “noon” instead of “12 pm” and “midnight” instead of “12 am” within body text.

The event is from 6:30 am to noon at Hubbell Street Galleries.

The special viewing starts at midnight.

The festival starts at noon and ends at 2 am.

Use the number 12 (for noon or midnight) if in a range within a list.

12–2 pm

12 am–6:30 pm

Time zone abbreviations are as follows: Eastern Time is ET, Central Time is CT, Mountain Time is MT, and Pacific Time is PT. It's unnecessary to include the time zone abbreviations in most cases.

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## NUMBERS AND QUANTITIES

### Numerals v. spelling out

Spell out whole numbers from one through nine. Use numerals for the numbers 10 and above. Spell out any number when it comes at the beginning of the sentence; however, it's fine to start a sentence with a year in numerals (though a rewrite may be best). Always use commas to separate the thousands in numbers 1,000 or greater.

The painter has written eight books.

She addressed the college's 1,600 students.

Fifteen starlets attended the 20th annual award ceremony.

The MFA Design program offers three tracks: Graphic Design, Industrial Design, and Interaction Design.

The Año Nuevo seabird nests provide homes for two types of auklets and over 20 other species.

It's fine to use numerals for numbers nine and below if part of a statistic, list, feature 1-up (CCA.edu), or other bold typographic treatment. In body copy, it should be spelled out as "number one," unless in the name of a business (e.g., "Painters #1 Gold Seal, LLC.").

#1 best value art and design school

CCA was ranked as the number one best value art and design school by PayScale in 2018.

### Academic units

Use numerals for academic units, even if nine or less. (We do not use the term "credits.")

The course is 6 units.

It is a 3-unit course.

### Decades

Use numerals for decades, without an apostrophe. Don't abbreviate decades.

the 1980s [NOT: "the '80s" or "the 1980's"]

### Grade/grader

Spell out the grade if it is less than 10; don't hyphenate unless it is needed to avoid confusion, such as when combined with another ordinal number.

a fourth grade student

first grader  
She's in the fifth grade  
He's in the 10th grade  
We don't offer pre-college opportunities for sixth grade students.  
She will be the sixth 10th-grader to join the YASP design studio.

## Money

Use numerals for monetary amounts, unless the amount appears at the beginning of a sentence. Omit a decimal point followed by two zeroes. Use a space and "USD" after the monetary amount in communications specifically directed toward international audiences. Use the word cents for amounts under \$1. Spell out the numeral if in the beginning of a sentence (though it's best to rewrite to avoid this kind of sentence construction). Use million or billion rather than writing out the full amount.

The student received a \$1,200 grant.  
You have earned a \$5,000 USD merit scholarship.  
Twelve dollars is all he spent. ["He spent \$12." is a better sentence]  
The supplies cost \$25.50.  
Here's my two cents.  
The institution's annual budget is \$25 million.

## Percent

To indicate a percentage in a sentence, use a numeral followed by the % sign, with no space, even if that number is less than 10.

The designer devoted 95% of her time to book design.  
It constitutes only 1% of our annual budget.

## Scores

Use a numeral for any numeric score, even if that number is less than 10.

He earned an 87% on the written final exam.  
She scored a 3 on the ACT.  
You must have an 80 iBT score or higher.

## Telephone numbers

Use hyphens in telephone number formatting. When possible, use the international phone number standard of +1 (this is a mandatory best practice on the website).

415-123-1234  
+1 415-123-1234

## Dimensions

Use numerals for all and no hyphens.

2D drawing  
4D drawing  
3D printing

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## TITLES

### Faculty

Faculty is plural.

### Capitalization of generic titles

Don't capitalize "team," "department," "office," "program," or "campus."

### Capitalization of job titles

Capitalize a person's job title **only** when it's a formal job title and appears before their name. Job titles of all rank are lowercase when used alone or offset by commas, except in formal contexts such as lists of honorees or when on their own line, such as in an email signature.

"Professor" before someone's name is capitalized when it is the formal title of that individual; however, if the term "professor" is an informal/general descriptor that comes before a person's name, it is not capitalized.

President Stephen Beal met with Governor Jerry Brown.

Stephen Beal is president of the college and Jerry Brown is governor of California.

The office of President Beal is on the Oakland campus.

Senior Adjunct Professor Elin Christopherson based her series on engineer Nikola Tesla's alternating current. [the job title senior adjunct professor is capitalized here because it's a formal title and comes before a name; however, engineer is an informal title and is thus lowercase, even though it comes before a name]

We spoke with Dean of Architecture Keith Krumwiede.

We spoke with Keith Krumwiede, dean of Architecture.

We spoke with JD Beltran, director of the Center for Impact at CCA.

CCA admissions counselor Katie Lange will meet with you on Friday.

The director of libraries supervises staff on both campuses.

Jonathan Massey is dean of Architecture, Tina Takemoto is the dean of Humanities and Sciences, Tammy Rae Carland is provost, and Allison Smith is dean of Fine Arts.

CCA Provost Tammy Rae Carland is respected for her entrepreneurial acumen.

CCA's Dean of Design Helen Maria Nugent is speaking tonight.

Helen Maria Nugent, dean of design, has organized an advanced studio elective with Ford.

The deans of our college are dedicated to every student's success.

The event was organized by trustee Lorna Meyer Calas.

### Professor of v. professor for

When possible, default to a shorter form (i.e., "of" is shorter than "for the").

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## IDENTITY AND REPRESENTATION

### Access and accessibility

CCA lives its values by providing access to all abilities, bodies, genders, and identities. We do this by starting from a holistic point of reference, where access is a primary goal and not an after-thought or next step.

We're ADA-compliant on campus and in our communications, including our [web content](#), and make our content accessible in a number of ways. We write in [plain language](#), are consistent in [our diction](#) to establish and reinforce mental models, [use present tense](#) verbs and gender-neutral [pronouns](#), and provide more than one way into content.

### Consent

Diversity is a core value of CCA, and it's important that we represent individuals as they wish to be presented. When possible, ask a source or individual what pronouns are preferred so that we identify them correctly in future stories or communications.

### Compound identification

Never hyphenate designations of dual heritage.

African American  
Asian American  
Japanese American

### Ethnicity and racial identity

An individual's ethnicity and racial identity are not necessary to include in a story or piece of communications unless they are specifically relevant to the individual's story.

### Gender neutral

Make your text gender neutral when possible.

human-made [NOT: man-made]  
humankind [NOT: mankind]  
chair [NOT: chairman, chairwoman, or chairperson]

### Latinx

The gender-neutral Latinx (and not Latino or Latina) is our preferred noun or adjective for a person from, or whose ancestors were from, a Spanish-speaking land or culture or from Latin America. Use a more specific identification when possible (and only if it is relevant to the individual's story), such as Cuban, Puerto Rican, or Mexican American.

## Pronouns

If the subject's gender is irrelevant or unknown, choose from gender-neutral pronouns: they, them, and their. When appropriate, use "she/her/hers" or "he/him/his." Never use "he/she" or "s/he."

Avoid using "he" or "she" as a singular pronoun of indefinite gender and instead rewrite the sentence, if you can:

Artists are cool people to know because they're always doing creative things. [NOT: An artist is a cool person to know because he is always doing creative things.]

## They as a singular pronoun

They/them/their is acceptable as a singular or gender-neutral pronoun. When they is used in the singular, it takes a plural verb.

Taylor said they need a new canvas.

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## CCA LEXICON

### Campus expansion

The phrase "campus expansion" is preferred over "campus unification" when communicating CCA's move to San Francisco. Verb forms of unification are acceptable when speaking more broadly about how the expansion will unify and connect our community and programs.

### Two campuses

When the campuses are mentioned together, "San Francisco" precedes "Oakland." The word "campus" is not capitalized.

### Academic programs

Program names are capitalized when used in reference to the program as a whole. The term "program" is lowercase.

He led the Sculpture program at CCA for 20 years.

### Disciplines v. divisions

The name of a general academic discipline (e.g., art, architecture, design, writing, humanities) is not capitalized unless it's a term that's always capitalized, such as "English," or is used as a proper noun.

She will study architecture at CCA in the fall.  
Learn about fine arts

[View more rules for CCA DIVISIONS, PROGRAMS, DEGREES, AND CURRICULUM](#)



## Division names

Division names (aka core disciplines) are capitalized when used in reference to the division as a whole. The term “division” is lowercase. We prefer the term “core discipline” over “division” when speaking to an external audience for clarity.

Architecture division  
Design division  
Fine Arts division  
Humanities and Sciences division  
She guides the Fine Arts curriculum.  
Design is a core discipline at CCA.

## Grade-level designations

Do not capitalize “freshman,” “first-year student,” et al. CCA prefers “first-year student,” “second-year student,” et al, over “freshman,” “sophomore,” et al, but there are some situations where it makes more sense to use the latter terms. Use best judgment for your given context.

It’s OK to use the adjective “rising” before a grade distinction when writing for special summer programs at CCA, such as Pre-College or one of our programs for middle school and rising high school students.

This program is ideal for rising high school sophomores who wish to explore art and design.

## CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts

Use the full title, CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, on first reference whenever possible. We generally prefer “Wattis Institute” over simply “Wattis,” but it’s fine to mix it up in a longer text when the meaning is clear and it would otherwise seem repetitive. Accepted informal alternatives to the full formal title include:

the Wattis Institute  
Wattis Institute  
CCA Wattis  
the Wattis  
Wattis

[\*View more rules for LOCATIONS, FACILITIES, AND ADDRESSES\*](#)

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## WORD LIST

advisor [not “adviser”]  
artmaking [noun, adjective]  
artist statement [not artist’s statement]  
Bay Area; the bay

changemaker [one word as noun]; change-making [hyphenated as verb]  
collegewide [one word]  
co-found [not cofound]  
coursework [compound noun]  
login [noun and adjective; not “sign-in” or “signin”]  
log in [verb; not “sign in”]  
major [don’t use as a synonym for “program” unless it’s for SEO purposes]  
microaggression [one word, no hyphen]  
mobile [not telephone, cell, cell phone, smartphone, or mobile device]  
nonprofit [no hyphen, one word]  
nonrefundable [no hyphen, one word]  
Portal [capitalized]  
residence hall [not dormitory or dorm]  
skill set [two words]  
study-abroad [adjective before a noun receives hyphenation; otherwise use study abroad]  
toolkit [one word, no hyphen]  
WebAdvisor  
wifi [lowercase, one word; not the Webster’s-recommended “Wi-Fi”]  
withdraw [verb]; withdrawal [noun; as in dropping a class and getting a refund]  
Workday

[View COMPREHENSIVE WORD LIST](#)