

PVAMU is in AP Style

All communicators at Prairie View A&M University should use Associated Press style for content that promotes the University. AP style provides guidelines for grammar and punctuation and is the primary style used in print and online publications around the country.

Download the Associated Press Stylebook at apstylebook.com.

Here are a few do's and don'ts when it comes to writing at PVAMU:

- **Do be concise.** Long blocks of text are difficult to read.
- **Do be conversational.** Write like you're telling the PVAMU story to a friend.
- **Do use an active rather than passive voice** to keep prose lively and interesting.
- **Do think like the audience** (students, parents, faculty, etc.) to whom you're speaking. Be mindful of each group's different needs.
- **Don't use PVAMU insider references** with audiences who are not deeply connected with the University.

Excellence
Lives Here

Writing for the Web vs. Print

When reading in print, people are more likely to read each individual word and finish long passages. On the web, people scan. We have about 10-20 seconds to make a point and pique a reader's interest with the least amount of words. For maximum effect, use bold headers, links, photos and select keywords. You have 100 words maximum per content block. Be quick, concise and creative. Also, keep in mind that potential students, faculty and staff may be reading PVAMU news on mobile devices.



Capitalization

UNIVERSITY

Capitalize the word "university" when referring to PVAMU.

- The University announced a new partnership today.
- Sasha would like to attend a public university in Texas.

COURSE NAMES

Use title caps on course names without italics or quotation marks.

- Dr. Panther teaches The History of Prairie View A&M University.

FELLOW OR SCHOLAR

Capitalize only if it's part of the official name.

- United Nations Fellow
- Thurgood Marshall Scholar
- Dr. Panther is a fellow at the Gates Foundation

PROGRAMS

Capitalize the names of programs, including the word "program." Do not capitalize "program" when used alone.

- Honors Program
- Innovation in Teaching Program
- Students applying to the program should turn in applications by May 15.

PUBLICATIONS

In general, put quotes around books, journals, magazines, movies, software, collections of poems, long poems, plays, operas and major musical compositions, paintings, and other artworks. Only capitalize "the" or "magazine" if that is how the publication uses it.

- The New York Times
- Newsweek
- the Boston Herald
- 1876 Magazine

SEASONS

Do not capitalize names of seasons unless part of a formal title.

- He will graduate in the summer of 2005 and start work in the fall.
- In August, we will attend the 111th Summer Commencement Convocation.

STUDENTS

Do not capitalize student classifications and majors.

- Abby Panther, a sophomore history major, is the student leader for SGA this year.

TITLES

As a general rule, if the title comes before the name, the title should be capitalized. If the title follows the name, it should be lowercase. In letters and lists, a title can be capitalized even when it follows the name.

- Dean Peter Panther delivered a lecture at the History Museum yesterday.
- Peter Panther, dean of the Prairie View A&M University College of Communications, announced a new Public Relations Program to be offered next year.

Referencing PVAMU

On the first reference, the full proper name of the University must be used – “Prairie View A&M University.” All subsequent references may be shortened to PVAMU or Prairie View A&M. “Prairie View” should never be used when referring to the University. The shortened “PV” should never be used in a formal document. However, for internal documents, “PV” may be used to reference the University.

DATES

Always use Arabic figures, without st, nd, rd, or th.

- Classes begin on January 22, 2022.
- His birthday is August 14.

FIGURES OR WORDS

Spell out numbers one through nine. Use figures for 10 and above. Follow this rule even when a sentence contains both types.

- Sasha is taking four classes this semester.
- She also works 40 hours a week at her internship.
- Pete has six children and 20 grandchildren.

Exceptions: Dollar figures (\$2 million), percentages (8%), page numbers (Page 48), addresses (1 University Dr.), time (8 p.m.)

STARTING SENTENCES

Spell out numbers at the beginning of a sentence.

- Thirty-five people attended the seminar.

TIME

Do not use 12:00; use either noon or midnight. Do not use double zeros at any time. When using a.m. and p.m., use lowercase and include periods. If indicating a time range, do not use a.m. or p.m. after the first time unless it is different from the following time. Use a dash to show a time range.

- The meeting is from 1-3:30 p.m.
- The meeting is from 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
- He arrived at noon. The class starts at 8 a.m.

Numbers

Punctuation

COMMAS

In AP style, omit the comma before the last item in a simple series. If the series includes internal commas that require semicolons or uses a conjunction such as “and,” include the comma.

- The mascots are Sasha, Pete and Panther.
- Prairie View A&M University offers courses titled Arts and Entertainment, Geology, History and Human Development, and Algebra.

PERCENTAGES

When referring to a specific figure, place the % sign immediately following the numeral. You don’t need a space between the number and the symbol. Place a zero to the left of the decimal point if citing an amount less than 1%. The zero makes the decimal point more visible and helps improve clarity.

- PVAMU’s retention rate is above 40%.
- Grades rose by 0.9% this week.

PERIODS

There should only be a single space after periods.

PLURALS

Form plurals of acronyms by adding an “s”; do not use an apostrophe.

- MBAs
- PTAs
- YMCAs People and Job Titles

POSSESSIVE

Singular proper names ending with “s” are made possessive by adding an apostrophe.

- Katherine Boles’ op-ed was about the profession of teaching.

Singular common nouns ending with “s” are made possessive by adding an ‘s.

- The hostess’s invitation was delivered.

QUOTATION MARKS

Quotation marks should always be outside other punctuation, with the exception of question marks, dashes, semicolons, and exclamation marks that are not part of the quotation.

- Pete said that he was “going to PVAMU.”
- Did Pete say, “I am going to PVAMU”?

Degrees and Programs

DEGREES

List after names with no space between the last period and the apostrophe. For more than one degree, list in ascending date order and separate by commas.

- Panther Pete, Ed.M.’02, Ed.L.D.’14

Always use periods with degrees:

- Ed.D.
- Ph.D.

PROGRAMS

Programs do not use periods. ■ UMA

Student Royals

Spell out Prairie View A&M University when referencing Miss and Mr. Prairie View A&M University. PVAMU can be used in less formal settings. Miss Prairie View A&M University should be displayed first, as the program was established before Mr. Prairie View A&M University.

- Miss Prairie View A&M University
- Mr. Prairie View A&M University

